A MAN OF ATHENS

JULIA D. DRACOUMIS

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A MAN OF ATHENS.

TALES OF A GREEK ISLAND.

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BY

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PART I

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CHAPTER I

EVERYWHERE was the sense of light; golden in the open spaces, deep, transparently blue in the shadows, vibrating and quivering through the cloudless blue of the sky, and blurring the soft purple of the hills, where their long, sweeping slopes touched the horizon.

An open carriage was mounting the slope toward the Acropolis, through the low pines and the clumps of gray-green aloes, and Theodora Douka, who had not been in Athens for nine years, leaned eagerly out.

At a bend of the up-curving road, she started to her feet, pointing high above her head; "Uncle! Costa! Polymnia! Look! Look at the columns of the Propylæa! Look how they stand out against the sky! Look at the color of it! Oh, I had forgotten that blue could be so blue!"

Her uncle caught hold of her arm. "My child! You will be falling out! Sit down! See, we are nearly there."

But as he pulled her down beside him, he kept his hand over hers, and smiled very tenderly at her enthusiasm, with a curious little uplifting of his gray mustache: for Aristidi Manelli, professor of history at the University of Athens, a special authority on ancient Egyptian history, understood all enthusiasms. In years he was sixty-five; in heart and suppleness of mind, not a day over thirty.

Theodora looked up into his face. "What a splendid idea you had, my uncle, to ask me to Athens now! If only father could be here too! You all, who live here, cannot understand how good it feels to be back."

Constantine Manelli, of the Greek Legation in London, protested smilingly: "You are too sweeping, my dear cousin: and what of me? Do I live here always? And do I not know what it feels like to be back? Ask Polymnia how often she gets weary of my rhapsodies!"

Polymnia Valliadi, a dark, handsome young woman, with a repressed tendency to stoutness, shook her head as she looked from her brother to her cousin. "You are amusing, both of you! Just try living here always, year after year, in all the heat and the dust, with nothing particular happening, and then we shall see!" For Polymnia would never admit that living in Athens offered any advantages over living in Manchester, for instance, or in Birmingham. One was nearer Paris there, at least, and the shops were much better.

This morning, when the deputation of professors and students from the College of Montpellier was to visit the Acropolis for the first time, she would certainly not have troubled to come up if it had not been for Theodora. However, her cousin, who had arrived only three days ago from Paris, was so excited about this event, and had seemed to take it so much for granted that they should all go up together, that she could not bear to disappoint her. One liked to please Theodora, she was so grateful always; and it was very long since she had been in Athens.

Polymnia remembered the time, just before she herself had been married, when Theodora, a tall, slim girl of fifteen, had come on a flying visit to Athens with her father, Michael Douka, a direct descendant of the Byzantine imperial family of Doukas, then minister to Vienna. She remembered the handsome, gray-haired man, with his courteous Old-World manners, and that indefinable look of always having been somebody. It was the first time she had seen him; for it was her mother and Theodora's, both dead long ago, who had been sisters.

It was soon after this that Douka had been transferred

to the London Legation, where Costa Manelli had been secretary. About two years ago there had been a change of ministry and Douka had lost his post. Theodora had hoped then — Polymnia knew it by one of her first letters — that they might return and settle in Athens, but her father had willed otherwise: he preferred to be near his future post whenever he should be appointed to it. For surely a Douka, who was willing to work and to represent his country, could not long remain out of public life. So they stayed for some time in Paris, wintered on the Riviera, returned to London, and revisited Vienna; and Theodora never wrote again of her longing for Athens.

For a long time Douka was positive of being sent to Rome; he who hated letter-writing wrote to every new deputy of his acquaintance on the subject. But it was a friend of one of the members of the Cabinet who obtained the post, after all. And the months rolled on and still Douka remained ex-minister, and still there was no talk of his returning to Athens. Instinctively the Manellis guessed that to do so would seem to him too much a confession of hope, not deferred, but abandoned. Even this visit of Theodora's would never have happened if one of her uncle's repeated invitations had not coincided with a matter of business concerning the sale of some building plots which had belonged to her mother, in the settling of which her presence was deemed advisable. So Theodora had taken ship at Marseilles under the guardianship of some friends who were going to Constantinople via Piræus, and her father had returned to Paris.

As the carriage drove up the last curve before the entrance to the Acropolis, Theodora saw a line of empty carriages on the plateau and a large group of people standing about the gate and on the first steps inside the enclosure. She gave a little exclamation and felt for the handle of the carriage door.

But her Cousin Costa was before her. "Stop here!" he

cried to the driver; and opening the door, he jumped down and turned to help her and his sister.

He was very like his father, though of slighter build: a man with nothing particularly distinctive about him, but whom most people remembered after having spoken to him once or twice; brown-haired and brown-eyed, neither fair nor dark, neither handsome nor plain, but with a straight line of nose, a slight division in the small mustache, and a cleft in the chin which gave something pleasant to the face.

"You need not be uneasy," he said; "they have not started saying anything yet." He kept pace with Theodora, who was walking quickly on to the gate, while the father and daughter followed more leisurely.

The deputation from Montpellier, massed inside the entrance, was a very typical French provincial one. There were many professors, some lean, some stout, but mostly stout; all tall-hatted and frock-coated, many, indeed, of the frock coats bearing the creases of recent packing. There were students of all descriptions, — classical students, archæological students, medical students, artists, and even agricultural students, — mostly of the square-faced, dark-eyed type of the South of France, but with a sprinkling of Northerners among them. There were a few wives and daughters of the professors; some of them had evidently visited Paris within the last few years, but most of them had not.

Among the receiving party of the Greek professors and the members of the French Archæological School stood a little old man with a round face and a bristling white mustache, clasping hands with one after another of the Montpellier professors, and being introduced to various of the ladies.

"But yes," he repeated; "it is as I tell you. My father was of Montpellier; Olivier Arnoux — professor of Greek. You may perhaps have heard of him in other times," —

all in a tone of voice striving hard to make itself modest. And the old face beamed with childish delight at the eager answers.

"Olivier Arnoux! But, my dear sir! Who in Montpellier has not heard of him?"

"His name was constantly on the lips of my father!"

"There is not one of us who does not know what he represented in Montpellier; even the younger ones. Ottilie, my dear, I present to you the son of Monsieur Olivier Arnoux. I am sure you have heard your uncle speak of him a thousand times."

Madame Autran, a massive lady dressed in jetted black silk, with a cock's feather boa round her throat, nodded impressively. "If I have heard! But certainly, monsieur; your father left a most honored name in Montpellier."

Monsieur Arnoux bowed low over the extended hand. "You are too good, madame."

"But not at all. It is the pure truth, I assure you. And shall we not have the pleasure of seeing you at all in our town? You live, I suppose, in Paris?"

Monsieur Arnoux shook his head. "No, madame; I have had some work in Paris for the last few years, but before that I lived here in Greece for a long time, and now in my old age I have, as you see, returned to my first love. Besides," — and he looked toward the group of Greek professors, — "all my friends are here."

What Monsieur Arnoux modestly called "some work in Paris" had been at first the curatorship of a private museum of antiquities, and later the general supervision and classification of all the Greek antiquities in the possession of the state. Son of a professor of Greek, he had come to Athens in his youth, as a student of the French Archæological School, and had stayed on afterwards, giving French lessons to support himself.

He had worked all through his early manhood among the old temples and the old manuscripts and the old

marbles, until the very spirit of ancient times seemed to have passed into his being. Also, he had always worked hard, and had given of his best; and his best was very fine.

So that in Paris, when the exigencies of his higher post had revealed the treasures of knowledge contained in the brain and memory of the little, quiet, white-headed old man, he could have had all the honors he cared for, and have been a university professor in any of the larger provincial centers, even in Paris itself; but he had refused all offers, and had returned to Athens. Greece, as the people say, "had kissed him on the mouth," and he would not leave her.

The official reception and speech were to take place on the top of the Acropolis, outside the Parthenon, and most of the people were mounting the wide steps leading to the Propylæa.

Theodora and Costa were almost the last, and his father and sister followed close behind them. It struck Professor Manelli that it was a pleasure to watch his niece as she sprang quickly from one high step to another, impatient of the slow-moving crowd before her. There was a superb erectness of bearing, a splendid vitality of body about her, which drew one's mind irresistibly to some of the older statues of Artemis.

A girl in a blue hat who was mounting in front of her, hanging on to the arm of one of the Montpellier professors, stopped to rest.

"They must have had legs long as grasshoppers, those ancients!" she said, breathing quickly. She was an anæmic-looking girl with a pretty, foolish face.

Her father, perhaps to cover her stop or her remark, said hurriedly, pointing below them: "Did you know, Céline, that the entrance through which we have just passed is the 'Porte Beulé'?"

"How funny!" commented Céline, "that we should

be entering the Acropolis by a gate bearing a French name!"

A tall young man, two or three steps higher up, turned round, and smiling a little at the remark, answered in slow but very correct French: "It is but fair, mademoiselle, that the gate should bear the name of Beulé since we owe its discovery to him. See!" And he read aloud from the tablet below them :—

> "La France a mis au jour la porte de l'Acropole,
> les murs, les tours et l'escalier enfouis. 1853.
> Beulé les a découverts."

Theodora liked the sound of the rather deep voice, and looked up at the speaker.

She saw a man, apparently about thirty, pointing to the inscription he had just read. Lean, and rather angular, he was intensely masculine in appearance. The face was long, thin, and dark, the eyes small, and the features indifferent. The hair was of a darker shade of brown than the slight mustache. There was something about the lips, which the mustache left uncovered, and in the cut of the chin, which gave an impression of firmness and decision.

The girl in the blue hat nodded and smiled her thanks for the information, and the flow of visitors continued the ascent.

Theodora bent toward her cousin. "Who was that, do you know?"

"Why, Philippides, the professor; the one who is to speak."

"That man! Why, he is only a boy!"

"He is just thirty."

"Yes, but he scarcely looks even that; and he does not give one the impression of a professor at all. He might be just — anybody."

"Ah, well, you see the University has decided that he is — somebody."

They passed under the simple Doric grandeur of the Propylæa and began the ascent of the sloping plane of gray stone beyond. Tufts of long, waving dandelions and little yellow brownhearts grew in all the interstices of the stone and under every shaft and capital of the broken columns that strewed the way, and clouds of little white butterflies hovered over them.

Professor Manelli came up to Theodora as she stood still for a moment facing the Parthenon and passed his arm through hers. "Well, little niece, have the years made any difference? It is all you remembered?"

"It is more, my uncle, it is greater — I remembered the perfect outline, but I had forgotten the color and above all the light. And there! Look there! It is so beautiful, it almost hurts." Turning, with a little break in her voice, she pointed to the west.

Salamis just then was of a rich golden brown near the water's edge, and purple at the top of her hills; the mountains of Ægina, Methana, and Poros melting away in the dim distance of the Saronic Gulf were of a violet-blue; and the sea itself, the wide, open bay of Phaleron, scarcely ruffled by the morning breeze, was pure blue, just the deep blue of the flag.

"If only father were here!"

"It would be most pleasant for us to have him with us,— but your father, my child, was never a lover of Athens."

"He fancies he does not like it. He has been accustomed, you see, all his life to the broader life of bigger capitals, to being part of wide European interests. But he worships beauty so, he could not but be happy here now — to-day —"

"Perhaps," said her uncle, with his whimsical little smile; then, as a sound of continuous speaking came from their right, "I think the lecture has begun."

When they had reached the open space under the north

side of the Parthenon, before the Erechtheum where all the strangers were assembled, the young professor was addressing them in French, speaking slowly and perhaps more precisely than a Frenchman would have done, but very simply, with no indication of a set speech elaborately prepared, or carefully learned by heart.

He stood with one foot on a broken piece of marble, his one hand resting on the raised knee, and the other hanging loosely beside him. Theodora could not help noticing that, though the hands themselves were finely shaped, the wrists were large, betraying the peasant origin. He stood awkwardly, and there was a slight stoop of the shoulders. The clothes, too, though of good quality, were not particularly well-fitting and were indifferently worn.

And yet, the most splendid figure of ancient days — Pericles in all his glory, Phidias showing a just completed statue to the public — could not have inspired a look of more reverent admiration than the one that was on the face of the little old Frenchman, Monsieur Arnoux, who stood close beside the speaker. His eyes were fixed on the young man and he followed eagerly every movement of his lips.

Philippides was telling his listeners of the formless masses of Turkish ruins which covered nearly all the ground within the walls when the men of the Revolution of 1821 first had time to look around them and to take count of the treasures of their priceless inheritance. As he warmed to his subject, his French became more fluent, there was less effort in the construction of his phrases, and the deep, sonorous, young voice reached the outstanding units of the crowds clearly and without a single dropping of tone.

"Greece," he continued, "has never been envious of those who came forward to take their part in the glorious work of unearthing her ancient monuments: she recognized that they were the heritage of all civilized nations."

He paused a moment, and looked around him: "And the first to come forward was France! General Maison and his brave soldiers, after helping to sweep out Ibrahim's hordes from the Peloponnesus, were the first to take part in the arduous archæological labors of the first years of Greece's resurrection. The 'Expédition scientifique' followed close on the traces of Maison. It was France who established the first archæological school! And always has she sent us the pick of her scholars as directors of the 'École française.' Other friendly nations have since followed her example, and we are grateful to all; but for ten years France was the only friend who worked by the side of regenerated Greece without any interest, save that of their common love of beauty. It is not the moment to speak of what *I* personally owe to France, — I, who passed from youth to manhood in the light of her teaching, — it would require many hours, not moments. But I speak for my nation, and it is in her name I say to you, whom we welcome here to-day, that Greece can *never* forget her manifold debt to France!"

There was something in the softening, without lowering, of his voice, as he spoke these last words, that brought a thrill to his hearers. A sense of emotion, of deepest gratitude, of age-old indebtedness, of brotherhood in art and learning, all contained in that one word "France!" For capricious Nature had endowed this awkward, almost plain, man with the sonorous voice of an orator, far-reaching, vibrating, and of an infinite seduction.

"If only," sighed Professor Manelli, "a few of our priests and deputies had his gift!"

"It is true," said Theodora slowly; "he could persuade one to almost anything."

At that moment Monsieur Arnoux passed them, talking excitedly to one of the Montpellier professors.

Polymnia, who had seated herself on a broken shaft, hailed him laughingly: "Monsieur Arnoux! Monsieur

Arnoux! I know I was a wretched pupil 'dans le temps,' but was I *so* bad that you will not even acknowledge me in public?"

The old Frenchman wheeled round and retraced his steps hurriedly. "A thousands pardons, madame! If only all my pupils had your kind memory of an old master! Monsieur le professeur, my respects! Ah, but I must be blind then to-day not to have seen that Monsieur Costa is with us once more. But I am very glad to see you, my friend; very glad, indeed." And he clasped hands warmly with Costa; then, as his eye fell on Theodora standing by, her uncle presented him to her.

"Monsieur Arnoux, this is my niece, Mademoiselle Douka, just arrived on a visit to us from Paris. Theodora, my child, Monsieur Arnoux is a very old friend of ours; I think he was away when you were last here."

They exchanged bows, and then, as they all walked on together in the direction of the Parthenon, where most of the party had preceded them, the professor added, speaking to Monsieur Arnoux, "Philippides spoke very beautifully; I must tell him so."

The old man's face lighted up. "It is I that you make happy, by saying so, Monsieur le professeur; as to him, he will not believe you! Metro — I mean Monsieur Philippides, has not the slightest idea of his own power. He has something to say of which his heart is full — something to explain — some one to convince — he says it. Good! But that he has said it as few others can succeed in doing — of that — no, you will never convince him!"

"Ah!" said Polymnia, "you are proud of your prodigy! And it is very natural; for you discovered him, did you not? They told me he was a little *loustro*,[1] or errand boy, or something of the kind when you picked him up."

Monsieur Arnoux drew himself up, ever so slightly. "They told you wrong, madame. Certainly the boy's

[1] Shoeblack.

father was only a boatman: that he tells freely to any one; but before the boy arrived in Athens, he had been to school in his island, and had learned all they could teach him there. That I have had the happiness to be of any help to him afterwards has always been, and always will be, a great joy to me."

They had reached the north side of the Parthenon as he said the last words, and he climbed nimbly up the steep steps so as to help the women to mount.

When Theodora took his outstretched hand, she impulsively pressed it. "You must be very proud, monsieur. It is a great thing to have helped to make a man."

After she had mounted all the steps, the old man returned the pressure before releasing her hand, and said very gravely: "I thank you, mademoiselle."

CHAPTER II

THEODORA had told Costa that she wanted to see how much Athens had "grown" in her absence, so they left the crowd behind them in the Parthenon, and went on to the tiny walled-in outlook on the eastern side.

All the city lay beneath them in the morning sun, spreading in washes of cream, and yellow, and mauve, and pale blue, and many-hued tiny Byzantine churches, until the colors faded into the larger white houses, the marble-pillared buildings, and statued terraces of the center of the town. Then, as the eye returned to its starting-point on the north side, the darker tints of the red-tiled roofs joined on to the gray rock itself. Masses of little houses, but with no overcrowding as in Northern cities; no straight, long rows of houses, no high, dark streets, no suspicion of slums, but with breathing-space between each low house, with vines over flat roof terraces, with solitary pine trees in the quarters nearer the rock, and with every now and then "the relief of cypresses."

Theodora turned her head toward the east to take in the dark expanse of trees of the Palace Gardens, the open square of the Zappion, the great columns of Olympian Zeus, and the gleam of marble from the Stadium. A few white clouds were floating over the top of Hymettus, and a long shaft of sunlight seemed resting at the foot of the mountain, on the Monastery of the Asteri. Behind Lycabettus were the low lines of Mount Pentelicus with the white scar of its marble quarries, and the long range of Parnès.

It happened to be a saint's day, and the din of church

bells accompanied by the deep bass of the Metropolis came up to them where they stood.

"What do these Christian bells in our old pagan town?"

quoted Manelli softly.

Theodora turned to him eagerly. "You, too, Costa? There are days when I would pull down every church in Athens, even the dear little Kapnikarea, and banish every priest that walks in the streets. In that, I am quite pagan, not Byzantine at all. We often have long discussions, my father and I; he, you know, is very particular. He never misses going to church on a Sunday, and if we happen to be in some place where there is no Greek church, we go to the Russian one."

Costa raised his eyebrows slightly. "I did not know my uncle was so religious."

"Oh, of course I do not mean that he is at all narrow-minded; but he thinks that a Douka ought to be strictly orthodox."

There was a pause, and then Costa said suddenly: "By the way, Theodora, I have arranged with Andriotti, the lawyer, to call and see you to-morrow morning about those building plots of yours; so remember you do not make any other engagement."

"Oh, hush!" said Theodora, wheeling round toward the Parthenon, behind which the sea had now turned a milky white, while the rocks of old Phaleron rose out of it in dark blue masses. "Building plots! and lawyers — and this!"

"Forgive me! These earthy matters — and expensive earth it is, too, luckily for you — shall not be mentioned again; only please remember to be in for the prosaic appointment, that is all."

Voices came to them from outside the little outlook, and in a moment two of the Greek professors who had been at the reception, Polymnia, her father, Monsieur Arnoux,

and the young orator of the ceremony, passed one by one through the narrow entrance.

"Costa!" said Professor Manelli, "I fancy you do not know Professor Philippides."

Costa took a step forward, and held out his hand with a very spontaneous gesture. "I know Professor Philippides quite well, but I am delighted with this opportunity of being made known to him."

Metro shook his head as he returned the handclasp. "I have not spoken to you, — no; but I know of you. Was it not you who wrote that notice of Klissa's pictures when they were exhibited in London?"

"You saw that?"

"Yes; I had seen the pictures when they were in Paris, and I seemed to see them again when I read what you wrote about them."

"This," continued Professor Manelli, "is my niece, Mademoiselle Douka."

Metro looked at Theodora for a moment before he touched her outstretched hand. "I saw — the lady — down there," pointing over his shoulder, "when I was speaking."

"Oh, do you notice faces in a crowd," asked Polymnia, "when you are making a speech? I fancied it would be, as they say it is on the stage, when one only sees a mass and not individuals."

"They say right; it is nearly always so. But when a face has beautiful lines it stands out from the others; at least it does for me."

He spoke with the same calm as though he had been alluding to the "lines" of the Parthenon; and all smiled, except Monsieur Arnoux, who looked slightly embarrassed.

"There is a compliment for you, Theodora!" said her uncle. "And one which, coming from a man who knows the value of 'lines' as Professor Philippides does, counts double. You should make a note of it."

"It is no compliment," put in Metro quickly; "it is the truth." Then, turning to Costa: "In the islands one meets sometimes the ancient Greek lines in faces. I knew a lad once, in our island, who might have been a model for any of the old sculptors; but in the big towns it is rarer."

"I suppose so," said Costa, "because of the mixture of races; and yet I can show you, here in Athens, a type — Do you know Lara, the naval officer? Nasso Lara?"

Metro shook his head.

"Well, I will introduce him to you some day and you shall see if he is not the exact prototype of the Hermes of Praxiteles! He has all; the broad, low forehead, the almost straight nose, the short upper lip, the rounded chin, the closely curling hair, the set of the neck on the shoulders — nothing is missing; it is Hermes alive again; and" — he added, laughing, — "very much alive!"

Polymnia Valliadi came close to her cousin. "Theodora, that reminds me. Did I tell you that I met Zoe Lara, your friend of the steamer, — she is this officer's cousin, you know, — when I was out yesterday, and asked her to come in to tea this afternoon with the rest?"

"No, you did not tell me," said Theodora, and a look of pleasure came into her eyes; "that was very good of you."

Costa looked at his sister. "And will she come?" he asked quickly.

"Oh, yes. She seemed delighted."

Costa turned to the young professor, still standing before them. "Kyrie Philippides, since it seems that these ladies are to be in this afternoon, will you and Monsieur Arnoux come and take tea with us and we can continue our talk on Greek types? Also I have three old Roman coins which I should like to show you."

"And you know," added Professor Manelli, "if you share my old-fashioned Greek tastes, the tea can become coffee."

Metro looked from one to the other. "You do me a great honor. I have to meet three of the French professors at the Numismatic Museum this afternoon; but if it be possible after that, I will come."

"For me, I regret deeply," said Monsieur Arnoux, "but it will not be possible; I have arranged to call for Monsieur and Madame Autran at their hotel."

As he spoke, the bells for noon began ringing all over the town, and there was a general move toward the entrance of the little outlook and back toward the Parthenon.

Theodora lagged behind, throwing glances toward the slender Ionic columns of the Erechtheum which they had not had time to approach. As they passed over the higher ground above the flat-roofed museum, she saw Metro Philippides hesitate for a moment and then return a few paces to join her.

"Mademoiselle," he began,— and she thought once more that she liked the deep tone of his voice, — "your name is very familiar to me."

She looked up, half-astonished, yet half-amused. Naturally it was a familiar name, the name of a family which had given four emperors to Byzantium. All her life she had been accustomed to have people recognize it at once, except foreigners or those who knew nothing of mediæval history; but she answered conventionally: "My father has traveled a great deal; he has often lived for long in Paris; you may probably have met him —"

"I! Your father? How could that be? I was only a student in Paris. No, I meant in my work. It is on so many coins, your name."

"Ah, yes, on the coins, of course. Do you know," she said, looking up into his face, "I, who have learned all about them from a child, who have copied out the catalogues for my father over and over again, I have never

seen any of our family coins, except just one that my father has: the one with the double heads."

"Michael Doukas cum Maria. 1071–1078," Metro murmured almost mechanically.

"Yes, that one. But nothing else. None of the Constantines, the Alexis, the Johannes. When we were here last time the Museum was closed or not properly classified or something, and we could not go."

"I will show them to you."

"Will you? That will make it much more interesting. But shall you have the time?"

"Yes, I shall find the time."

They were passing now by the southern side of the Parthenon, and she stopped at almost every pace, now looking up at the great columns to her right, now craning her neck over the Theater of Dionysus far below on her left, now passing her hand over the carving of some of the fallen shafts and capitals before her. Metro's eyes were fixed upon her as she stooped and rose, and stooped again, and stepped back a few paces to look at a corner of the cornice, high above her head. He noticed that, though a tall woman and rather largely made, her movements were swift and supple.

"It is long, mademoiselle, since you have been in Athens?"

"It is more than nine years."

"That is a long time. You are glad now to be in our country again?"

"Sometimes I am sorry."

"Why?"

"Because it is so beautiful, and because I know I must leave it again."

"But that is foolish," said Metro, with quiet island directness; "if you wait to be happy until happiness comes without interruption, you may wait long. Even if you must go away again to foreign parts, you will have tasted

a new joy here; you will have lived for a little time in a land where there is much beauty."

Theodora sat down half-unconsciously on a wooden bench opposite the western entrance of the Parthenon.

"Of course I have seen hundreds of beautiful places abroad; how could it be otherwise? But this beauty seems so much of another kind that it seems to require another word for it. Other places may be grand or splendid or magnificent, but they never have the lightness, the purity, the simplicity of this." She stretched out her hand to the shadows falling aslant through the double colonnade, and the oblongs and triangles of luminous blue sky, intersected by the tawny-colored marble.

"Was there always the colonnade?" she asked.

"It is thought so: for as long as we know; from the time of the wooden temples, in the eleventh century B.C., when the colonnade consisted of rows of wooden posts driven into the earth. Come here!" he said suddenly; and striding unceremoniously on in front he led her up to the steps of the Parthenon and pointed upward to the under side of the cornice surmounting the frieze. "Did you know that those rows of small flat marble disks are relics of the wooden temple?"

"But how?"

"They represent the heads of the wooden pegs driven through the planks to hold the cornice in place."

"No," said Theodora; "I never knew. I know little of the history of the temples or of their architecture. I can only admire."

"But the more you learn —" he began.

"The more I shall admire," she completed, smiling; "that I *do* know."

A voice at her side startled her.

"My *dear* child!"

A middle-aged, small woman, in a blue serge dress and

round felt hat, was standing close beside her, looking at her with wide-open gray eyes under very black eyebrows, and holding out both hands. She was dark-skinned, with a short, insignificant nose and a rather long upper lip, but the look was very keen, and the smile very pleasant, and there was a distinct charm in the bright, undeniable ugliness.

Theodora clasped both her hands eagerly. "Miss Burney! When did you come? I never knew you were up here! Oh, you have n't changed one little bit! Not one day has passed over you, as the people say. How do you manage to keep so young?"

"Well, my dear, I try hard, but there's a lamentable difference between keeping young and being young. Turn round! Let me look at you! I can't say you've not changed, can I? But you've grown up into exactly the sort of woman I expected you would. Oh, you *are* good to look at!"

Theodora colored a little and looked quickly round, but Metro, on hearing the rapid English, had joined the others, and the two women were alone.

"Were you in the crowd with the deputation, Miss Burney? How was it I never saw you?"

"No; I have only just come up. I went round to the Manellis' house after giving my lesson at the Arsakion, and found every one out, even Polymnia's children; but the servant told me you had all driven up here, so I followed."

"On foot?"

"Of course. Did n't I tell you I mean to keep young! Still, I really think I walked too fast, I was in such a hurry to see you."

Theodora passed her arm through the older woman's, and together they began to walk slowly toward the others.

"Miss Burney, I had forgotten just how nice you are!"

"Well, I hope you'll have plenty of time to remember. Shall you stay long here?"

"One month certainly; perhaps more."

"That'll soon be over, but we'll just have to make it do. And so you rushed poor Polymnia right up here the very first thing? I wonder how many years it is since she last came!"

Theodora laughed. "Oh, Miss Burney, *do* you remember how she used to grumble when it was my turn to choose our walk, and I always chose here, or climbing Lycabettus, instead of up and down the Pepper-Tree Avenue?"

Miss Burney nodded, smiling, and went on in another tone. "So you traveled with Zoe Lara and her father?"

"Have you seen her? Did she tell you?"

"She told me that you had fallen in 'friendship' with each other on board the Saghalien."

"You know her well, Miss Burney?"

"She and her Cousin Nasso were among my very first pupils in Athens."

"And I need not ask if you like her?"

"Like her? Well, I must say I generally manage to get fond of most of my pupils in one fashion or another; but Zoe — there was no managing required, and one is fond of her in all fashions."

Outside the Porte Beulé some had already started off down the slope and others were standing round the carriages. Professor Manelli, one foot on the step of the open landau, turned round to ask Miss Burney what changes she had found in his niece, and she answered him lengthily and courageously in her execrable French.

Polymnia Valliadi had already taken her seat in the carriage. "Theodora!" she called out, "it is hours since the bells rang for noon. Have you forgotten that you are lunching at the Delamanas'?"

"I remember. But they do not lunch until one o'clock; Roxane told me so."

Miss Burney looked at the watch on her wrist. "The 'hours' since noon are only twenty minutes, and Theodora is going to walk back with me. We've so much to say. Won't you, Theodora?"

"I meant to."

"That's right! Come with us, Polymnia! It's ever so much better than driving, on a morning like this, and it will be like old days, the three of us, walking down the Pepper-Tree Avenue. Come!"

But Polymnia showed no sign of moving. "We can do that another day. Come into the carriage both of you, and talk as we go along! There is plenty of room. Besides, Miss Burney," — with a slightly injured expression, — "you forget I have been standing about for two whole hours, and that is far more tiring than walking."

Costa Manelli cut short the discussion by jumping into the carriage after his father, and closing the door. "It is not the least good, Polymnia, to appeal to Miss Burney. She has remained so persistently young that she has no fellow-feeling left for tired middle-aged people like you and me!" With a laugh and a wave of the hand to Miss Burney and Theodora, he gave the order to the coachman to drive on.

The two stood for a moment on the open plateau, laughing at the polyglot importunities of a vendor of post-cards and little colored blocks of marble, who, hearing English, had taken them for innocent foreigners; and then they started down the slope by a short cut through the thyme bushes and the little pines.

"It is true, you know, Theodora," said Miss Burney, stepping lightly from one rock to another; "they all laugh at me a little, but I am sure it is true. I am never going to grow old if age means weariness and lack of interest and tiredness of mind — tiredness of feet does n't matter.

Because you know when you can still thrill to the sound of a marching regiment, still fall in love with the hero or heroine of the last interesting book, still look at a sympathetic stranger in a crowded car, and dream in him or her a possible friend, still care to hear about new things — then you are not old! You are not even getting old. Now tell me about yourself! How is it you came here alone?"

"Well, you see, my father does not care much for Athens; or rather he soon wearies. He has neither his clubs here, nor his friends, nor the newspapers he always reads; it changes all his habits, so that when he has been round the town once or twice, and seen all our relations, the life soon begins to pall on him. It is quite natural," she added eagerly.

"Oh, perfectly."

"And so, as there is a business matter, which it seems ought to be explained to one of us personally, and the Zafirides were traveling to Constantinople and could bring me, my father decided to let me come. Besides, my Uncle Aristidi, and Polymnia here, had been constantly writing that I ought to come and see my mother's people again, after so many years."

"To speak quite frankly, I think you ought. You Greeks are always so united in your families. And, somehow, it seems a bit lonesome, my child, for a young girl like you to have been roaming about Europe all these years without a female relation to your name."

"Lonesome! But I was always with my father!"

"You are the same companions as ever, then?"

"While we were in Vienna and London — when he was still in the service; I really believe there was scarcely a document went out of the Legation with which I had not helped him. Since he has been free —" She paused, and went on with a changed voice: "Oh! if only he could be appointed again! You cannot think how he feels it, Miss Burney! It seems so hard to him, that any one should

be chosen before a Douka to represent our country! And it *is* hard; it is more than hard. It is a shame! And there is not even the pretext that he is old for the position. He is a man in the prime of life!"

"Then he has not aged much since I saw him here, nine years ago?"

"Scarcely at all: just a little grayer; but it gives him an air more 'grand seigneur' than ever."

"Your father has no relations of his own here?"

"Neither here nor anywhere; he was an only son, and so was his father; the Doukas have never had many children."

"Then — ?"

"Yes, he is the last of the name."

"I suppose he must have wished for a son?"

"How could it be otherwise? But never once, Miss Burney, never once has he let me feel his disappointment that I was not a boy, as so many other men would have done. On the contrary, he often says, 'What should I do without my dear daughter?'"

They had come out on to the old arch of Hadrian and stood looking across at the wonderfully tall yet wonderfully graceful columns of Olympian Jupiter.

Theodora was very glad she had elected to walk. The first part of the road after they had passed the Theater of Dionysus had been alive with men and women of the people, the distinctive populace of the poorer quarters, in gray homespun and knitted shawls, in many patches and few rags: young girls with fine eyes and no head-covering, old women in those faded, unpaintable poverty tints, and black kerchiefs shading their faces, madonna-wise; big and little *loustro* boys, laden with shoe boxes and sheaves of newspapers; bearded, black-robed priests and Portia-like divinity students, and here and there a tall, splendidly handsome Cretan, his baggy blue breeches swinging as he strode along; or a couple of peasant con-

scripts fresh from their village, with sun-tanned faces and clumsily fitting uniforms, staring at everything with wide-open eyes.

And once past the Columns, down the Pepper-Tree Avenue came the long procession of Athenian babies, some wheeled along by white-clad, black-bonneted English nurses, some running along by the side of broad-aproned "dadas," and older ones walking beside Swiss, German, or French governesses and chatting away in fluent French or German.

They were nearly at the end of the Pepper-Tree Avenue when a tall, white-haired officer in uniform met them, and saluted Theodora as he passed.

"You know General Kardanis?"

"He was at my uncle's last night, and he and Costa had *such* a long discussion. It was interesting, too; a born soldier on the one side and a pronounced anti-militarist on the other."

"Zoe would have enjoyed that! She ought to have been a boy! What a soldier she would have made! Ah — poor child!"

"I'm so glad she is coming this afternoon. I was not quite five days with her on the steamer, and I have missed her ever since I landed."

"You never knew her before? Never met her when you were last here? The Laras have always lived in Athens."

"No; I never met her; and besides she must have been only a child of ten at that time."

"Did you see much of her father?"

"Not much; he sat downstairs writing most of the time; and even when he was on deck, he had a block and pencil, and looked busy."

"He never knows how to take a holiday, and since his wife died they say he has been worse."

"When did she die?"

"When Zoe was only about three, I believe."

"I thought her father seemed a nice man, with very gentle manners, but not as though he counted very much."

"He does n't particularly, though he is one of the richest men in Athens."

Theodora seemed a little surprised. "Is he really?"

"Why, he is director of the Attic Bank."

"Yes; I knew that, and also that he has a beautiful house and large garden right in the middle of the Kiphissia Road; but I heard him saying, once on the steamer, that he had bought the land long ago when the Kiphissia Road was considered in the suburbs."

"So he did, but they continue living in it now when it has become a very valuable property. Have you been to their house?"

"Not yet."

"Ah, then you have not met 'Aunt Virginia'?"

"The unmarried aunt, who lives with them? No. Why do you ask? What is she like? Zoe never talked of her."

"Neither will I, my dear. I leave her to your unbiased judgment. By the way, did Zoe play for you?"

"No; does she play? She never told me."

"She would n't. But make her play the first time you can. She makes the piano speak; and the piano is not a very speaking instrument."

They had passed the Palace, and had reached the corner of the Kiphissia Road.

Theodora came to a stop. "I must leave you here, Miss Burney. You will come to the Manellis' for tea in the afternoon, will you not? Polymnia told me she had asked you."

"I only wish I could; but I have three lessons after lunch, and I have promised to take two of my pupils down to Phaleron."

"But you will come and see me very soon?"

"I will, my dear. I want to see all I can of you while you are here."

"Come the very first day you are free; I want to show you my father's latest photograph. But I must go now; it is nearly one o'clock."

And she walked up the road at a rapid pace under the trees.

CHAPTER III

When Metro Philippides had returned to Athens from Paris, a year before, he had taken two rooms in a rather shabby-looking house situated behind the French Archæological School. It was the house where Monsieur Arnoux had lived for years, ever since the time when he had first met Metro, a thin, overgrown lad of sixteen, starving himself through his gymnasium classes on thirty or forty drachmæ a month, earned by odd jobs in off hours. From the very first the old man had noted the eager, hungry-for-learning eyes of the boy, fixed on him during his one hour's French lesson a week in the Plaka Gymnasium: and almost at once he had spoken to him out of school, and had encouraged him to come up to his rooms on their few leisure evenings, for extra French lessons.

Monsieur Arnoux had told Metro that book-learning was very good in its way for the study of languages, but that free colloquial French was much better attained by the familiar knowledge and use of the names of ordinary objects of everyday life. Such things, for instance, as chairs, tables, plates, forks, knives, spoons, dishes, and the various eatables placed upon them. And it was with this end in view, as the little old Frenchman carefully explained with a twirl of his gray mustache, that he generally waited for him before sitting down to supper, so that Metro should get plenty of practice. On these occasions the suppers were generally prepared by Monsieur Arnoux himself, on a little oil stove beside the provision cupboard. If he had a weakness in his quiet, frugal, hard-working life, it was for good cooking: for food tastily, carefully, almost religiously prepared in the French fashion, — that

best of all cooking fashions. And having lived much alone and having understood that brains are quite as necessary in the proper mixing of a sauce, as in the drawing up of an archæological report or in the correction of a translation, he would bend over the little stove, a white towel pinned round his waist, wooden spoon in hand, and initiate Metro into the mysteries of "œufs à la Polignac" or of "foie de mouton à la Provençale," explaining, as he stirred or mixed or dropped pinches of flour or salt, how a larger laurel leaf or an extra drop of wine might spoil all the delicacy of the flavor. And Metro peeled the vegetables, and broke the eggs, and laid the table, and changed the plates, and learned the names of everything in French with astonishing rapidity, and ate hungrily, and adored Monsieur Arnoux from those days to the end of his life.

Five years later, just after Metro had already been through some classes of the University and had completed his military service, Monsieur Arnoux had received the offer of the curatorship of a private museum of archæology in Paris, and it was there that he had taken Metro with him as his assistant. This had been the first step of a very rapid upward career, and Metro had risen to be adviser in chief to more than one of the Government numismatic museums and collections before he left France. But he had always kept close to his first master, and when he had returned home to Greece, Monsieur Arnoux had not been long in following him. The old Frenchman had thought to end his days in his own country, but he had not been able to stay away from the lad. He thought it was only this which drew him back, but it was the lure of Athens as well. He knew that it was so, after he had returned to his old quarters. He found Metro settled in the rooms of the floor above him, which was very convenient for many reasons. A single knock, for instance, with a walking stick on the floor of the upper room, or with the cobweb pole on the ceiling of the lower

one, meant, "I am ready to go out"; two — "I shall be half an hour yet"; three — "I am not working; shall I come up?" or "come down," as the case might be; and so on through a whole code of prearranged signals.

On this October day, as Metro was climbing the stairs to the third floor, the woman of the house called out to him that he must forgive the servant girl if his rooms were not done, but the unfortunate one had been taken with such a pain at "her heart" — that generic name of the Greek servant for any ache or pain in the regions between the neck and the knees — that she thought she was going to drop down dead on the spot!

Metro, being of the people himself, was not unduly startled. "Let it be," he answered; "I am going out again later on, and she can sweep the rooms then."

He turned the handle of his door, and feeling warm after his steep walk, crossed over to the window and threw it open, fastening back the sash against the wall. Then he pushed the morning's empty coffee cup, with the cigar ash piled in the saucer, to the back of the long table, pulled forward his inkstand and three or four books, bristling with strips of paper to mark places, and set to work.

The room, being distempered a light cream, and being full of sunlight, was cheerful enough, but except for being full of books did not indicate any special tastes of its occupant. It was a place to work in, a place to read in, — even a place to dream in; but evidently a place which had been accepted as he found it. Metro had been a lover of beauty from the time he roamed, a sun-browned, barefooted little lad over the hills of Poros — of beauty of line, beauty of form, and beauty of color, but he had still to learn that part of this beauty can be carried into one's living-place; for him, as yet, a room was just a room — a space enclosed within four walls containing the necessary tables, chairs, and cupboards. When the beauty-hunger became pressing, one left the town and walked

down to the sea, or out into the country as far as one could get, or, if the time could not be spared, one threw open the window and looked at the mountains.

So he had only taken care that the writing table, placed at right angles with the window, should be very large, and that the bookshelves against the wall behind him should be many and long, so as to accommodate all his books. On the wall behind the table, facing him as he wrote, were fastened three ordinary picture postcards from Poros. One represented the Monastery, the second the little white houses rising one behind the other to the top of the hill, as seen from the sea, and the third a view of the bay with the village of Galata opposite.

Metro glanced at them for a moment, as he threw upon the floor the paper mark from one book and opened another. Three separate knocks sounded sharply on the ceiling of the room below. Metro hesitated a second, and then answered by one loud stamp of his foot, which meant, "Yes, come up!" and a minute later he heard Monsieur Arnoux's footsteps on the stairs. The old man opened the door, closed it again, and threw himself into a chair near the open window.

"Ouf!" he exclaimed, wiping his forehead; "one cannot say that it is not hot for October."

"Yes," assented Metro as he copied a line from a book he was holding open; "winter is not near us yet."

"You walked back?" asked Monsieur Arnoux.

"Yes."

"Have you eaten, or did you forget it like last Sunday?"

"No; I went to the Averoff restaurant. And you, master?"

"Oh, I—" and Monsieur Arnoux laughed a little; "I did not wish to accept on so short an acquaintance. I refused repeatedly; I made a thousand excuses; but two of the professors, Messieurs Camus and Bompard, insisted on taking me to lunch with them at their hotel,

at the Minerva where they are staying. I assure you, my friend, I was forced to go with them at the end."

"But why should you not accept their invitation? It is quite natural they should want to have you. I am glad you went. It is always good to talk of one's youth, and the place where one has lived."

"And it is a real pleasure to talk to them," continued Monsieur Arnoux; "I found them as charming as they are learned. You will see; for you are to meet them at three at the Numismatic Museum; is it not so?"

Metro glanced at a loud-ticking little clock half-hidden behind the piled-up books on the table. "In an hour; yes."

Monsieur Arnoux lifted his hot face to catch the cool breeze from the window.

"Master," Metro asked suddenly, "was it Michael the Seventh, or Alexis the Fifth, who was first surnamed 'Mourzouflis'? Mionnet says it was Alexis, but in the other book it is written that it was Michael."

Monsieur Arnoux was startled. "Of what are you talking, my friend? 'Mourzouflis'? What is this barbarous word?"

"It means, 'He whose eyebrows join,' in the language of the Byzantine populace. It was said of the Douka emperors. Do you not recollect?"

"Ah, yes; I remember now. It was Alexis, I think, but I would not put my hand in the fire. Why do you need to know?"

"Oh, for nothing. Only it says here that it is a family trait that can be traced in all the portraits, and which has persisted generation after generation — and I noticed that she did not have it."

"She! Who?"

"The young girl up on the Acropolis, this morning!"

"Do you mean Professor Manelli's niece? Mademoiselle Douka?"

"Yes," answered Metro; "she is like some statues of Artemis of the fourth century; not at all a Byzantine type."

"It is quite possible that the young lady may be like the maternal side of her family," suggested Monsieur Arnoux; then in a moment he asked, "Metro, did you finish your lecture for Friday?"

"Yes; last night before I slept."

"Did you find the explanation you wanted about the repeated letters on that small silver coin of Zante?"

"Yes; Andriotti brought me two Ionian law-books of 1640. And I must remember to take them back, too: they are not his. Ah! If one only had money to buy all the books one wants! Not to borrow right and left; not to have to cover this one for fear of a coffee-stain, or an ink-stain on the back; not to be asked to return that one 'as soon as one has quite finished with it.' As though," with an impatient little grunt, "one ever finishes with a book!"

"Well, there is the money you got last week for that article in the 'Revue Numismatique'; there might be a good amount of books in that little sum; — eh?"

Metro did not answer; he threw another paper marker on the floor and pushed a new pen into a well-bitten pen-holder.

But the old master had never required words in order to understand Metro. "Ah!" he said softly; "la bonne mère? The little sum traveled to Poros; — eh?"

Then, receiving no answer again, he added quickly: "Forgive me, my friend, if I am indiscreet!"

The young man turned in his chair, and smiled suddenly with a boyish smile which lighted up all his face for an instant.

"From you there is no indiscretion; never! You see," he added, almost apologetically, "if one waits to buy wood until the winter, it is damp and will not burn well; and she

is too old to gather it for herself any longer. She has broken her back sufficiently for us all her life."

"She is — how old, la bonne mère?"

Metro shrugged his shoulders. "Do they ever know their age, the old women? No one has written it, and if it were written, they cannot read. But as I calculate, she must be close to seventy."

"That is a good age! And to be all alone! What a pity her granddaughter cannot live in Poros!"

"It is a pity, yes; but her man has good work in Larissa. How can he leave it? Also there are many children. But Maroussa is a good woman; she sends things to her grandmother whenever she can."

There was a short pause, and then Metro asked suddenly: "Master, will you tell me how it is possible for a family to know that it has been the same from father to son for four or five hundred years? This Douka, for instance, the father of this young girl; they say he is a direct descendant of the Doukas of Byzantium, of the emperors. How can he know it for certain, since all family papers and books and documents were lost or destroyed in 1821, at the time of the Revolution?"

"That was in Greece and in the islands, but the Douka family of those days, I have heard, lived in Vienna before the Revolution broke out. I wonder," he continued, musingly, "if this demoiselle has a brother? The father must be terribly annoyed if there is no son."

"Why, since they are emperors no longer? A son, a daughter, what difference does it make?"

"I imagine that the old man finds it makes a very great one. But if there be none, I expect that when this young girl marries, one of her sons may take the name. It is often done in great families." Then, after a moment, "Shall you go to the Manellis' house, later on?"

"Yes; I shall go from the Museum."

"Unless the professors keep you too long there."

"No; I shall tell them I have to go elsewhere. Since the young man and his father both asked me to their house, why should I not go? Also I like to look at her."

Monsieur Arnoux smiled a little. "Take care you do not look too much, my friend!"

"Why?" asked Metro simply. "Can one look too much at a beautiful thing?"

Metro found the Montpellier professors as charming as Monsieur Arnoux had foretold. Being profoundly and intelligently interested in all that he had to show them at the Numismatic Museum, they naturally became interesting in their questions and comments; nevertheless, it was not much after four o'clock when he crossed over from the shady to the sunny side of one of the steep streets leading up to Mount Lycabettus, and stopped before the door of the Manellis' house.

As long as he had known Athens, he had known this house with its little brass plate just under the door-handle, with "A. Manelli" engraved upon it. Countless times he had passed before it, and noticed the brightness of the brass, and the letters half-effaced through the polishing of many years; and when, almost as soon as he rang, the door was opened, he recognized the same old white-haired manservant whom he had often seen polishing it.

Yes, certainly, the old man assured him, the master was in and the ladies. Would "his nobility" trouble himself by going down that passage to the right of the little hall; the door of the *sala* was the last one.

Metro recognized the sing-song Corfiote accent, and smiled a little, for he had never yet been called "his nobility."

Before the hall door had been closed, he heard rapid footsteps behind him, and turned to see Costa Manelli running up the steps.

"Why are you shutting me out, Gerassimos? What crime have I committed that you should banish me from my father's threshold?" Then, turning to Metro: "I am delighted to welcome you to our house, my dear Philippides; if you will allow me, as the elder of the two, to drop the 'Kyrie'?"

"But, of course," answered Metro, smiling a little shyly.

"Who is here?" asked Costa of the servant, as he hung his hat up.

The old man explained volubly, with soft Italian words slipping into his Greek, that he could not tell for certain, because he had been sent on a message and the maid had answered the door, but he had just taken tea into the sala; "and though," he added, "I am not, as you know, Kyrie Costa, one of those modern servants who have no shame, and who stand about and stare at their master's guests, still I am under the impression that there was only that gentleman, the lawyer, who came last Sunday, and our old lady."

Manelli laughed as he drew Metro with him down the passage. "Gerassimos is a terrible chatterer, but one of the old devoted servants whom you cannot find nowadays. 'Our old lady' means my father's aunt, Kyria Scrivella. She is over eighty, I believe, but wonderfully young for her years. Come in! Come in!" And he threw open the door at the end of the passage.

Notwithstanding Gerassimos's impressions, it seemed to Metro, as he walked into the long, pleasant, sunny room, that it was full of people. He was aware at first that Polymnia Valliadi was sitting in a low chair near a tea-table, that the old professor was advancing toward him with outstretched hand, that a little old lady with white hair was sitting near the window, and that a man, whose back was turned to him, was talking to her. And then his eyes rested on Theodora, who was standing beside the open fireplace, with two fair little girls hanging on to

her arms. She was wearing a dress of gray, something soft and transparent. Metro, for all the years spent in Paris, knew nothing of *la bonne faiseuse*, but the lines of the clinging material satisfied him.

However, the professor was speaking to him, and he had to look away.

"So you have managed to spare us a little time from your French friends. That is very good of you! I hope this will be only the first of a great many times that I shall have the pleasure of welcoming you here." Then, interrupting Metro's words of thanks, he continued; "I want, first of all, to introduce you to my aunt, Kyria Scrivella. We are always so pleased when her health permits her to come to us. She has lived in Athens since before King Otho's days, and unlike most very old people she remembers all the interesting parts of her long life as well as the trifles."

He drew Metro with him up to the window, as he talked.

"My aunt," he said, "will you permit me to present to you, Kyrios Demetrios Philippides, my youngest colleague at the University?"

The little old lady looked up. "I have heard of the gentleman," she said, in a voice wonderfully strong and steady for her years; "Costa has spoken of him. It was he who spoke this morning at the Acropolis, was it not? I am very pleased to know you, Kyrie Philippides."

Metro bent his head in acknowledgment, and after a moment's hesitation, put out his hand. The old lady looked at him, smiled just for a second, and laid her own in it.

Then Metro, happening to glance at the young man who had stepped aside when they approached, saw to his astonishment that it was his friend Andriotti who was smiling at him.

The young lawyer, a trimly dressed, clever-looking man, raised his eyebrows in seeming surprise. "Why, Metro!

What is this new thing? Since when have you taken to frequenting drawing-rooms?"

"Ah, you know each other?" asked the old professor.

"Since the time," laughed Andriotti, "when, as a homesick student in Paris, I lost myself looking for a little Greek restaurant, of which I had been told, behind the Porte Saint-Martin, and met Metro, bent on the same errand, who served as my guide and conductor. It was over an excellent pilaf," he added, "that we swore eternal friendship! Do you remember that pilaf, Metro? It was in June, and the first fresh little tomatoes from Marseilles encircled the dish."

"Yes — " answered Metro vaguely; "I suppose they did."

Andriotti shook his head. "Your numismatic memory, my friend, is unrivaled, but one can never depend upon your gastronomic one."

The little old lady laughed. "If he did not develop it in Paris, his case is hopeless."

Costa Manelli, who had just come up to them, bent over the old lady's hand and kissed it.

Metro looked at him, and wondered uncomfortably if that was what had been expected of him also: but in Poros, it was only the priest's hand that one ever kissed, and in Paris he had never been into any society but that of two or three of Monsieur Arnoux's friends — bachelors, like the old man himself.

Suddenly Polymnia Valliadi called to him from her place at the tea table: "Kyrie Philippides, will you not come here and have some tea? It has just been brought in fresh."

Metro started toward her, stammering over his answer. To him, tea had remained the beverage you buy at the chemists', and which is excellent for a bad cold.

But the old professor came to his rescue. "No, no, Polymnia! We are old-fashioned Greeks; none of your

foreign, colored hot waters for us! We will have coffee. I waited for you, before taking my afternoon coffee," he added, turning to Metro, "being sure you would prefer to share it. I will ring for Gerassimos to bring it."

Theodora, who was still talking to the little girls, looked at Metro and smiled. "Your French professors did not keep you too long at the Museum?"

"They wanted to stay longer, but I told them I must go elsewhere."

"How nice of you to remember! So many men forget all social engagements when they get together and begin talking."

"It was not possible that I should forget. I wanted to come here much more than to talk to them. Though" — he added gravely — "they talked well."

Theodora flushed slightly. "Was it at the Numismatic Museum?"

"Yes." He hesitated a second, and then asked, "When shall you come?"

"I must arrange with my uncle, who wants to come also, and see what day suits him. Or, perhaps, if you will tell us when you can spare the time —"

One of the little girls leaned over the back of Theodora's chair, with a plate in her hand. "Auntie Theodora, these are the caramels I made myself. I went upstairs to bring them for you. Mamma would not let us put them on the tea table, because some of them have stuck together; but the taste is quite good; quite like the real shop ones; do taste them!"

Theodora smiled at the child, a pretty, fair little thing of seven or eight, and carefully breaking off a piece of the mass of chocolate caramels, put it into her mouth.

"Bravo, Despina! The taste is excellent. You *are* clever!"

The younger child, not quite so pretty, but still fairer, who had been sitting on the floor, turned round and

leaned her arms across Theodora's knees. "I can make them, too, Auntie Theodora: I really can. And I can make some with lemon; only this morning, when Despina was making these, I had to have my hair washed, and now I have none to give you." This last in a very doleful voice.

"Never mind, Hypatia! We will ask your mamma for some sugar to-morrow, and you shall show me how to make them. Kyrie Philippides, will you not taste a caramel of these very clever little housewives?"

Metro tried to break off a small piece of the brown mass offered to him, but he did not manage it, and the little child Hypatia solved the difficulty by breaking off a piece sharply against the fender and then putting it to his lips. He accepted it quite simply, and then stroked the child's cheek a little awkwardly.

"Despina! Hypatia! Come here!" Their mother, who was speaking to some ladies, who had just been shown in, called them from across the room.

They ran toward her, their fair hair flying out behind them.

"They are your nieces?"

"My second nieces; or as the French say, 'A la mode de Bretagne.' They are my Cousin Kyria Valliadi's children."

"How fair they are! Their skin — their hair — Is your cousin's husband, perhaps, foreign?"

"Nico Valliadi? Oh, no! He is rather a fair man, though, but nothing like the fairness of the children."

"He is away?"

"Yes, his work is in India, and the climate there, you know, is not fit for European children, so their mother lives here with them. They are dear little things," she added; "and became quite fond of me from the day I arrived. In fact they want to be with me all day long."

Metro did not make the obvious reply, but stood silent looking down at the young girl as she sat, her hands

folded loosely on her knees, her head leaning against the straight embroidered back of an old-fashioned armchair.

All the furniture in the Manellis' sitting-room was old-fashioned, but unfortunately not sufficiently so to go back to the age of fine lines and soft tints. Most of it had belonged to Theodora's aunt, and there were relics of Second Empire furniture, from the time the Mavrodanachi family had been established in Marseilles, and some specimens of hideous Early Victorian furniture, reminiscent of its final settlement in London. Added to this was the accumulation of heterogeneous objects, inevitable when three generations live together and have traveled much.

Professor Manelli was one of the easiest and most yielding of men, but one of his few absolute rules was that nothing in this room should be altered. His children might add all they liked, but could put nothing away. Polymnia, who had a natural talent for furnishing, and whose own bedroom was as modern as pretty cretonnes and the last English furnishing catalogues could make it, had often pleaded with him for permission to remove some of what she privately termed "rubbish," on pretense of the room being overcrowded, but always in vain.

Yet, explain it who can, the whole effect of the room was harmonious and pleasant in the extreme. And as Metro stood there, looking alternately at Theodora and at all that surrounded her, he felt vaguely that the whole formed a picture not quite like anything that he had ever seen before.

"The coffee, Kyrie," said a voice at his elbow, and Metro turned to find Gerassimos smiling deferentially as he presented two small cups of black coffee on a little silver tray. He pointed to the foremost cup, and added in a low voice: "If your nobility will kindly take this one, — the master likes his rather bitter."

"Gerassimos," said Theodora, looking kindly at the old man as she got up from her chair, "always remembers

everybody's tastes." Then, turning to Metro, "Shall we go to the tea table? There are some very nice sandwiches, and I should like some tea."

Polymnia received them hospitably, pressed sandwiches and little cakes upon Metro, and introduced him to two elderly ladies, whose names he did not catch, and to a younger one whom she called "Kyria Paschali, our good doctor's wife," and whom she addressed familiarly as "Smaragda."

This was a very pretty, small woman, with bright, round, birdlike eyes, wearing a large black hat evidently copied from the very latest Paris model. She bowed rather carelessly to Metro, murmuring a conventional "I am most pleased," and then smiled brilliantly at Theodora, showing all her upper teeth, which were very white and perfect, and the gums above them. "How nice to meet you again! I was hoping you would be in. I scarcely saw you when I called on Sunday. Really, it is unbelievable" — turning to the older ladies — "that this should be the small child Theodora Douka, who was in Athens such a few years ago!"

"Nine years, my dear," put in Polymnia.

"The small child," said Theodora, smiling, "was fifteen at the time of which you speak, and a big fifteen, too."

"My dear! Don't say it! You don't look a day over twenty now. And what a *lovely* dress! Paris is stamped on every fold of it. Do come over here to the window and let me look at the back! There, my dear Polymnia!" she called out in a sharp voice that carried to every corner of the room; "I *knew* pleats were flat and broad this year, not narrow, as that dressmaker of mine, Euterpe, wanted to make me have on my new dress. Now, is n't it lucky the dress is n't cut yet? Euterpe's child fell ill or something, and she put me off. It is true what the proverb says, 'Every obstacle is for some good.'"

In the mean time Metro had been standing by the tea

table, studying it curiously. It was all new to him: the embroidered tablecloth, the tiny lace doilies under the cakes, the china tea stands, the thin slices of lemon in the little cut-glass plate and the special little fork with which to pick them up, the silver teakettle with its burning spirit lamp. He had not known a table could look so pretty. As Theodora came back with Kyria Paschali, he ventured to offer them one of the plates of cakes.

"No, thank you," said the latter; "no éclairs for me. I am growing too stout."

Theodora laughed. "But you are quite slender!"

"You think so because I take such care; but if I were to eat cakes in the afternoon, good-bye to my figure!"

"And how is the dear little boy, whom I remember you once brought to see us?" asked Theodora; "he must be quite a big boy now!"

"Solon! He closes his twelve years next month: taller than I am he is already, and in the second Greek class. There are two more you know since then; — Miltiadi and Pericli. For my part, I hate ancient names; I wanted to call them Leon and Victor. But my husband is not at all modern, and you know how obstinate men can be. Milto and Periclaki we call them."

"Are they as pretty as Solon was? I remember his big black eyes, and his curls."

"Milto is rather like him. But Periclaki is fair, and such a quiet, good child! Only that he does not grow very fast, and keeps rather pale. But really it is no wonder, so ill as I was when he was born."

Theodora threw a warning glance toward the two little girls who were standing by the tea table listening eagerly to the talk, but it passed completely unheeded.

"How I did not die then was a wonder! Three doctors day and night for forty-eight hours; — and Dr. Ambrosiades, who is the best woman's doctor, said —"

"Oh!" cried Theodora, "how dark it is getting! Can

it be going to rain? Despina! Hypatia! Do go to the window and see if there are any drops on the panes"; and as soon as they had obediently run off, she turned smilingly to Kyria Paschali. "You must let me come to you some day, with Polymnia, when you are at home; I should so like to see your little boys and renew acquaintance with Dr. Paschali."

"Auntie Theodora! Auntie Theodora!" cried two shrill little voices from the distant window; "Uncle Costa has got hold of our hair, and he won't let us come back to you; Auntie Theodora! Oh! Oh!"

"Excuse me," laughed Theodora, "I must be off to the rescue."

"I cannot endure the woman," said Costa as Theodora joined them. "She is always talking of her maternal duties, and the time they take up in her life, and you never by any chance see her with those blessed boys of hers; not even with the 'golden child' Periclaki."

"Why," interrupted Theodora, "it *is* raining, and raining heavily; oh, what a pity!"

"One can see that you are not an Athenian, my child," put in the old lady from the next window, who had in the mean time beckoned to Metro and was talking to him; "we want the rain badly to lay the dust."

"Then," said Theodora, "if it would only be obliging enough to rain in the night. I cannot tell you how I miss the sun in the daytime." And as she spoke, she came up to Kyria Scrivella, and stood beside her chair.

"You will have plenty of sunshine here in Athens, more than you want. Besides," added the old lady, "since you are so fond of it, you will enjoy it all the more when it comes out again."

"But I am afraid," objected Theodora, "that I am greedy and like my good things permanently."

"Perhaps," ventured Metro, "you do not understand the feeling of satiety. Some few people do not."

Theodora looked at him quickly. "That is it," she said; "the sunshine, and a lovely view, and a tune I like, are a fresh joy to me, every time I feel or see or hear them."

"What a terribly constant person!" laughed Costa Manelli. "And what a truly enviable quality!"

"Ah, but you forget the reverse of the medal."

"Which is —?"

"That no long habit, no enforced association, can soften dislike."

"But that is quite natural," said Metro; "as the English poet," he added, with a quiet little smile, "did not say: 'A thing of ugliness is a torment for ever.'"

"Oh, but I think one *does* get accustomed in time," said Andriotti; "people say that after the first year of married life a man scarcely knows whether his wife is pretty or ugly."

"I know they pretend that," said Theodora; "and some French author has also said, 'Qui donc après un mois regarde par sa fenêtre?' But I should always know and I should always look. Always! There is one place — an island — where Costa and I went to stay for a week, many years ago, with some people whom my aunt knew; an island of green pines, and purple hills, and blue, blue sea. It is a place where ordinary comforts and conveniences are often missing, where the people told me one has all sorts of small troubles and worries to endure, where servants will not stay, where the days follow one another in sunny but unvarying monotony, and yet, I am positive, whatever happened to one in that island, one could never bear it a single grudge, one would forgive it everything, for the sake of its perfect beauty."

Metro, whose eyes were shining, had come closer and closer to her. Suddenly, unconsciously, he laid his hand on her arm. "Is it Poros? It sounds so like it."

Theodora looked up at him smiling. "Yes; it is Poros."

"But — where — when?"

"At the Red House. But you — ?"

"I was born in Poros. It is my island."

He spoke as the people do; but old Kyria Scrivella did not understand. "You mean your family had property there?"

"No," said Metro simply; "I had no family; I was a poor man's child, and an orphan from the time I was very little. A good woman took me in, and brought me up, and wanted to make me a boatman like my father before me. But I — I wanted to learn things — and I did. That is all."

Impulsively, Theodora held out her hand. "With all my heart I congratulate you; it is splendid to have done so well what you set out to do."

"And I," added Manelli softly, "I envy you. What more can a man desire?"

"Ah, mademoiselle," said Andriotti, "if you only knew all I have heard about this famous island of Poros! Whether we walked the streets of Montmartre, whether we went to a café or to a theater, or on Sundays took the bateau-mouche to Issy, or the train to Fontainebleau, it was Poros, Poros, Poros! After all, as I told him, I am from Patras, which is far from being a place to be despised, and I never could get in a word about it. Would you believe —"

But Theodora did not let him finish. She had risen to her feet. "Here is Zoe!" she exclaimed, crossing the room hurriedly.

Gerassimos had thrown the door open, and a young girl, accompanied by an officer in naval uniform, appeared on the threshold.

CHAPTER IV

METRO turned as Theodora spoke, and looked in the same direction. His eyes fell first on the young man, and remained fixed there in wondering admiration.

The young officer was standing just inside the door of the room, looking round him, with a smile of complete ease on his clean-shaven, boyish face. His perfectly shaped head, covered with short, closely curling hair, was set admirably on the broad shoulders. Though the type was so purely Greek, the coloring was almost Northern, the skin being startlingly white where the tan had not reached it. For all his striking beauty there was not a trace of conceit about the boy, and his wide-open gray eyes laughed with frank enjoyment as he spoke to his hostess.

The young girl who had come into the room with him, and who was talking to Theodora, both hands held in hers, had a face almost as beautiful in a different style; wide at the forehead, and pointed at the chin, with heavy-lidded black eyes, the white of which was nearly blue; the hair was black also and wavy, and the skin rather dark but very smooth and most delicately colored.

She disengaged herself suddenly and turned to Polymnia. "Kyria Valliadi, I do not know what Nasso has been telling you, but it is for me to make excuses. He chose this afternoon for tearing himself away from his beloved ship and coming up from Salamis, and as he does not honor us very often, I felt rather bad at leaving him all alone at the house and brought him along with me."

"Come, now, Zoe! Do be fair!" cried her cousin; "did I want much bringing?"

"Well, no; not very much. In fact, now you remind me, I rather think you asked to come."

Upon which every one laughed, and Polymnia made the young officer sit down beside her and rang for more chocolate éclairs.

For Nasso Lara was beloved as well as beautiful, which does not always follow by any manner of means. His whole-hearted enjoyment of everything, from an amusing book to the good cut of his last uniform, from the sight of a lovely woman to the taste of a good dinner, from a gala performance at the Royal Theater to the marionette show at the little square of the Reservoir, was so thorough that some part of his enjoyment could not but spread to his companions of the moment. Then his interest in all his friends, and the friends of his friends, was so absolutely sincere! If he inquired in the morning after any one's headache or toothache, one felt unmistakably that it was because he really wanted to know if the night had been free from pain, and not because it was the correct thing to ask. And with all this, he was, as Zoe put it, "so absurdly handsome," which, as the French say, "spoils nothing."

Theodora drew up one of the smaller chairs to the tea table. "Zoe, sit down and have your tea here! Don't you hate being stranded far from any table and balancing a teacup in empty air?"

"Yes," said the young girl; "only wait a moment until I speak to old Kyria Scrivella; she is making signs to me." But as soon as she moved, Metro repressed a little start. The pity of it with that lovely face! It was not even a slight limp, but a displacement of the whole hip. When she was halfway across the room, the two little girls who had been occupied with a puzzle at the other end ran toward her and threw their arms round her rather

vehemently, with excited cries of "Oh, Zoe! Zoe! Why did you not bring Baloo with you?"

The girl was thrown off her balance for a moment and nervously clutched hold of the back of a chair to steady herself.

Costa Manelli, who had been talking to Andriotti, turned sharply on his heel and caught hold of one of his little nieces by the shoulder.

"Be quiet, children!" he said; "no roughness, if you please, or you go straight upstairs." He spoke in a sharp voice; in fact, Metro had not thought it could be so sharp.

"No harm is done," said Zoe, in rather an offhand manner; "and no one is going upstairs. Baloo," she answered, bending over the children, "*never* makes visits with me; other people don't always like dogs in their houses. He receives his friends and admirers at home and more especially in the garden. Come and see him any day you like." Then she put them aside, and went up to the old lady. "Kyria Scrivella, please forgive my delay, but your little great-grandnieces were keeping me."

"My child, you are always welcome, whether early or late. Sit down here beside me. It seems to me that I have not seen you for a long time."

"We have been away, you see, my father and I, — ever since June; we returned by the last Messageries boat from Marseilles: a week ago last Tuesday."

"The last Messageries boat," repeated the old lady musingly; "and I who saw the first one! I remember going down to Piræus and seeing the ship come in; and all the shouting and the flags. We went on board, too, and the captain — a handsome man he was — gave us champagne in his cabin, to drink to the success of the new line. What an enormous ship it seemed to us then! I forget the name of it; it seemed bigger than the Mauretanias and the Lusitanias do now, I suppose, for we had

no point of comparison; we had seen nothing a little smaller, not even half the size."

"Zoe, your tea is getting cold!" Theodora called out.

"Go, my child, go!"

Zoe rose from her chair, and, bending over the old lady, raised her hand to her lips. At times, and with some people, she had a certain almost boylike chivalry of manner about her. She limped across the room and sat down beside Theodora at the table.

"What were the children teasing about?" asked Polymnia.

"They wanted Baloo, and I told them to come and see him whenever they liked."

"Was he glad to get home to Athens?" asked Theodora.

"Glad! I thought he would never finish being glad; he nearly knocked me over in his excitement the first day, he who is always so gentle with me. Poor Baloo! like his namesake he is getting fat and old, and his memory is failing just a little. I left him sitting inside the closed iron gates of the garden, with nose raised to the sky, howling with a most lugubrious howl because I would not let him follow the carriage."

"Poor dog!" exclaimed Smaragda Paschali; "why did you not bring him with you, since he wanted to come so much?"

"No, indeed!" answered Zoe, with a slight touch of real indignation ending in a laugh. "Do I look like the slave of any dog, even the nicest of his species? Baloo knows his place; it is he who is *my* slave."

But Smaragda Paschali had had enough of dog talk. "Why did you not come to Hermione Vassopoulo's poker party yesterday, Kyria Papastathi?" she asked a stout, elderly lady, one of those to whom Metro had been first introduced; "they were expecting you for a long time, and at last, when you did not come, one of her sisters made the fifth at the second table."

The lady addressed, who had thrown open a black silk jacket, worn over a white blouse, whose deep lace collar was half inside and half outside her jacket, stopped fanning herself to answer. She always complained of the heat of a room at all seasons of the year, and habitually loosened her outer garments as soon as she entered it. Amédée de Sabry, of the French Legation, had been heard to compare her unkindly to an "unmade bed."

"I meant to come, but my daughter wanted to go to the tennis club, and as her governess had a day off, I had to go with her."

"Ah!" said the second lady, Kyria Astriadi by name; "it is the reign of the young people now. In *my* time our mothers did not give up their poker or euchre parties to take us pleasuring."

"The world has changed," said Smaragda Paschali sententiously, and turned again to Kyria Papastathi. "You lost by not coming; it was a splendid game; so nice and quiet — no outsiders to hang round the tables and make a noise."

"Did you win?"

"A trifle; in fact, I was losing until nearly the end, but the two or three last pots saved me."

"And who lost the most?"

"Oh, Thomopoulo lost about seventy drachmæ, but he can afford it, you know."

Just then Professor Manelli, who had been escorting his aunt to her carriage, joined the group and the two elderly ladies got up to leave.

So farewells were exchanged, and there was a general move toward the door.

"Are you leaving?" Metro asked Andriotti, in an undertone.

But Costa Manelli heard him. "No! No! Neither he nor you. I have to show you those coins yet; besides, the nicest part of the afternoon begins now, the 'little

evening' as Gerassimos calls it. Come near the fire, the rain has turned the air chilly."

So those who remained gathered round the fireplace, which had just been lighted with three or four big olive logs and a few pine cones.

Zoe pulled herself on to the arm of Theodora's big chair, and sitting there she bent over and whispered in her ear: "Look at Nasso!"

Theodora looked across at the big fair boy, who had one of the little girls on each knee and was making them laugh immoderately at something he was telling them. "I really think," she said, "that he is physically one of the most perfect human beings I ever saw! He is your first cousin?"

"Strictly speaking, yes; but it is a sort of brother-cousin. His father and mother died within a month of each other, when he was quite a little fellow, in Marseilles; and he was sent over here to my father, who was his father's eldest brother, and lived with us until he went into the Naval School. Such a funny, dried-up old Frenchwoman his nurse was! — Ottilie — she stayed with us many years."

Nasso himself came up to them as they sat there, with his hand resting on Metro's arm. "Zoe, have you got those snapshots you took of the ship, that time you came down to Salamis in the spring?"

"Yes; I have them at the house with all this year's collection."

"Well, Kyrios Philippides would like to see them; he has never seen any of the new type of ships, and he is very interested in them."

Metro had not known before that he was particularly interested in the last new type of ship, but Nasso always took it for granted that people would be interested in what he had to tell them, with the result that he generally ended by creating the interest in which he believed.

"Next time I come up to Athens," he went on, "can I arrange to meet him somewhere, and bring him to the house to see them? Then you can show him all your other photographs also."

"Certainly, you must," said Zoe, smiling at Metro; "I shall be delighted to see Professor Philippides, and I am sure my father will too; I have heard him speak of him."

"This young lady, you must know," said old Professor Manelli, coming up to them, "is a first-class photographer. She has some studies of waves and clouds at Phaleron which are wonderful."

"Yes," said Zoe, very simply; "I have worked a great deal, and I can make good pictures now. This summer I got some really interesting ones," she added.

"Where did you go this summer?" asked Polymnia.

"We stayed in Germany a good deal. My father had some business at a small place near Dresden, so we stayed in the town and he went backwards and forwards."

"You did not go to Paris at all?"

"No; we meant to go, but it was a rush at the end, and we tried to make Vienna do instead — but it does n't."

"Nothing — nothing can take the place of Paris!" said Theodora. "Oh!" she cried, appealing to all around her, "do you not know that delightful smell of Paris, first thing in the morning? How often, when we arrive overnight, I wait for my father in the reading-room of the hotel until he is ready to go out, and then we saunter down the Boulevards, in the fresh crisp air, and sniff, and sniff, and sniff. 'It smells Paris, Theodora!' and, 'It smells Paris, father!' we say together. I don't know what it is exactly, but —"

"Good restaurants, good cigars, and wood smoke all mixed together," suggested Costa.

"Perhaps, — I don't know, — but the mixture, whatever it may be, spells Paris. Oh! only to stand on the Pont Alexandre III, on a morning in spring, and look

over the river between its tall columns with their winged horses, is enjoyment enough!"

"And what," said Metro, in his soft bass voice, "of standing at the top of the Escalier de Sainte-Marie, right up at the Sacré-Cœur itself, with all Paris lying below you?"

He was leaning against the fireplace with his elbow on the shelf, and in the light, which was getting dim, he looked very tall.

Theodora turned in her chair so as to face him. "Is it so beautiful? I have never been there."

"Beautiful? It is more than beautiful; at night, with all the myriad lights of the town below, it is as though you were a king — a god — with all the world yours, at your feet!"

"Do you remember," asked Andriotti, "the first night you took me there — up to 'the heights,' up the stone steps, up to the Rue Müller, right up to the Basilique?"

Metro remembered, and remembering forgot his shyness, forgot that he was surrounded by strangers, and talked; talked of the Paris he had seen and lived in, and which he could make them see.

His was not the Paris of the Boulevards, of the big hotels, of the fashionable cafés in the blaze of electric lights, of the glittering shops, of the Bois, of Arménonville with its rose-decked tables and its Tzigane orchestra. His was the Paris of the student, of the worker, of him who lives on the fewest possible francs a month with which it is possible to purchase sufficient food, decent clothing, and leisure to work; who breakfasts at a *crémerie* and dines at some shabby café on marble-topped tables.

"Only now and then, when I could," he added, "I would pass by the Boulevards, for the sake of standing before the big flower shops. You see I had never dreamed of such flowers and of the way they placed them. In Poros there were only the wild ones of the hills, and here in Athens, what they used to sell at the corner of the

Kiphissia Road. Now," — and as he spoke, he touched some lovely chrysanthemums on the mantel shelf, — "they cultivate some beautiful ones here also, but when I was a boy there were only the ordinary kinds; and so in Paris I liked to see the pictures they made of the flower windows, with the tall, upstanding red roses, and the masses of white lilac, and the mimosas from Nice, and the big Japanese chrysanthemums like these; and of course, there were none of those shops in the quarter where I lived."

And then he brought the old quarter before them and the students who thronged it; he took them with him up the long steep Boulevard Barbès, and the Rue de Clignan court, and the Rue de la Nature, into the dim, narrow streets, like the Rue André del Sarte, with its tall old houses, and its curio shops, and its little dark taverns, which d'Artagnan might well have appointed as meeting-places to Porthos or Aramis; into quarters where shabby, disreputable shops join on to fine carved portals leading into spacious courtyards of old "noble houses."

And then, because his listeners were good listeners, he went on to tell them of some of the less visited museums and collections and churches and historical landmarks. He spoke of an old palace, in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, with huge circular court, old gates, old arches, old trees, — it belongs to some vicomtesse now, he said, but in other days the Dubarry used to walk under its elms.

"Everything," he said, "seemed to me so intensely modern; as though I could put out my hand and touch those who had lived in those palaces and languished in those prisons. Once I spoke to an old, old woman who lived in a little shop in the Rue Ronsard, and her grandmother had seen Marie Antoinette come into Paris as a bride. I went one day," he added, in the lower tone of one who touches on a sacred subject, "to the waxen figures in the Musée Grevin, and there I saw reconstituted the

room where he — the Emperor — died at St. Helena; a small place with only one man — a servant — sitting on a chair with bowed shoulders, his head hidden in his arms, grieving, and — the Emperor lying dead on his bed. It seemed so very near to us, so very near; why, it struck me then that Kyra Sophoula's own mother might have swept out his rooms, had they lived in the same country!"

"Who is Kyra Sophoula?" asked Polymnia.

"The old woman who brought me up," he answered.

And Theodora noticed the simplicity with which he had used the example, "might have swept out his rooms," instead of substituting, as many would have done, "might have spoken with him."

Then Nasso had begun talking of Toulon and the pleasant months spent there, and of its Casino, and of Mayol, and Fragson, and Ester Le Quin, and all the delightful little French songs which you never hear in Athens.

"Perhaps just as well," murmured the old professor, smiling.

"But no, I assure you," protested Nasso, "there are all kinds; and many are quite tender and pretty, and even sad, and make you want to cry — I mean, of course," he corrected, "all the women."

"Of course," laughed Zoe; "we *quite* understand; only the women, *of course*."

Nasso ignored the interruption. "You should hear 'Le mouchoir' and 'Les mains de femmes' and 'Reviens au village!'"

And then quite naturally the piano was opened and scraps of tunes were played or hummed or whistled, and Theodora discovered that Nasso, so that no gift should be missing, possessed a charming voice. He had taken a few lessons here and there, Zoe told her, but had been too lazy or too impatient ever to have his voice properly

trained, always considering vocal exercises superfluous and uninteresting when he could get hold of any songs.

Nasso wheeled round on the old-fashioned piano stool. "Do you know what would have happened then? One day I should be out of practice, another I should have a slight sore throat, another I should be preparing for a concert and must keep my voice fresh and untired, and so on, and so on, so that I should never sing for any one until the week that has no Saturday. Whereas, now, since you are kind enough to say you like to hear me, I can sing to you whenever and wherever you like!"

"You will?" said Theodora, "really?"

"Of course!" assented Nasso, with the bright smile of a pleased child that made part of his charm; "fix some day next week with Zoe, and you shall have my whole repertoire, Greek, French, Italian, even a few Irish ones that Miss Burney taught me, for the days when she feels weepy and wants to remember the 'ould counthry.'"

Suddenly Andriotti announced that it was nearly eight o'clock, and every one was very much astonished and got up to go.

Metro shook hands warmly with his hosts. "I thank you once more for asking me to your house."

"You will be welcome always," said the old professor simply.

To Theodora, Metro said, "Then I shall expect your note about the day for the Numismatic Museum."

And she answered: "Thank you, I will write." And then, suddenly moved by an unaccountable impulse, she drew three or four of the big chrysanthemums from the glass vase on the mantel shelf, twisted the stems in a strip of paper, and offered them to him. "To remind you of the Paris flower shops," she said, smiling.

Almost before he had taken them, she felt some bewilderment at what she had done. For she was not in the habit of offering flowers to young men.

But Metro accepted them perfectly naturally. "Thank you; they are very beautiful."

Outside he found Zoe waiting while Gerassimos helped Nasso on with his big naval overcoat. The three left the house together, Andriotti having preceded them.

"How the time flew!" said Nasso; "I must say I enjoyed myself."

Zoe gave his arm a little squeeze. "Don't you always enjoy yourself, you big baby? But I must not tease you to-day, for I did also."

"And yet you always say you hate tea parties."

"It was n't the tea party I enjoyed. Though I confess we got very nice and comfortable when the 'bandar-log' had left. I came solely to see and talk with Theodora, and that was what I enjoyed."

They had reached the end of the short street, and when they stopped to say good-night, she suddenly looked up into Metro's eyes, as she held out her hand to him. "Do you know, Kyrie Philippides, — I believe your sole object was the same as mine!"

"Zoe!" gasped Nasso, horrified; "what are you saying?"

But Metro took her hand and smiled down at her. "It does not matter. If God has given good eyes to some, it is to see far. It is quite true, what you believe. I wish you good appetite, and good-night. My way is to the right."

CHAPTER V

Professor Manelli's study was a small room with three well-filled bookcases and a big writing table drawn up to the window. Opposite this table hung a great, square, heavily framed painting; it was a family portrait of the kind prevalent in London in the early sixties, and represented the three little Mavrodanachi sisters, in flounced muslin dresses and short ringlets, holding wreaths of roses against a background of vividly green trees and marble urns; on the grass at their feet sat a little boy, in a blue velvet suit and lace collar, with unnaturally smooth hair. The eldest girl, who had been Theodora's mother, looked about ten years old, and the youngest and fairest, who had been Professor Manelli's wife, could not have been more than six.

Theodora sat near the writing table, on which Andriotti, the lawyer, had spread his papers. Costa Manelli was seated sideways on a chair, with his arms crossed along the back of it.

Theodora looked supremely bored; she had been talking, or rather listlessly listening to, business for the last hour, and though living with Michael Douka, her father, might be, and indeed was, a liberal education in many ways, business training was not included in the curriculum.

At last Andriotti rose and began collecting his papers. "You have quite understood, have you not, mademoiselle, that if you wish to sell, I consider the offer of which I told you a most advantageous one under present circumstances; on the other hand, should the projected road go through the east side of the land, you may, of course, obtain a much better price eventually; but if it does not,

and the chances seem about equal, you may never again get such a good offer as the present one."

"I have quite understood, and I thank you very much for the clear way in which you have explained everything," answered Theodora, smiling.

Andriotti took his leave, and Costa accompanied him down the passage to the front door.

Theodora, left alone, tore up one or two pieces of paper, arranged her uncle's pens and pencils in his tray, looked at the clock, and started to go upstairs to put on her hat, for she was to meet Miss Burney outside the Royal Garden at a quarter to twelve. She heard the outer door close, and Costa came back into the room just as she was leaving it.

"Well," he said; "this is a matter which must be decided soon, one way or another. Andriotti told me so again, now, as he was leaving. Who will write to your father, you or I?"

"To my father? What for?"

"Why, about this land; about this decision to be taken."

"But why bother father about it? You know how he hates business."

"But, my dear Theodora, that is not the question —"

"But, my dear Costa, I assure you it is." And as she laughed a little, and threw back her shoulders against the door, she looked very straight and tall. "Father *never* troubles about business matters; he leaves all that to me. In this case as the big price which is offered is certain and immediate, and the bigger one that depends on the opening of the new road is problematical, if father thought about the matter at all, he would certainly say, 'Sell the land!'"

"Well, if you ask my opinion, I should certainly say, 'Wait,' as I think the road is practically a certainty."

"But of course I ask your opinion. What else have I been doing since the first day I arrived, only you kept

constantly telling me I must judge for myself. Now, you have at last given it, I accept it with blindfold eyes. We will tell your lawyer to refuse the offer, and I can write afterwards, or tell father when I return, that you said it was better not to sell."

"My dear child, it is not so simple as all that! You can neither accept nor refuse the offer without consulting your father; any more than he could without consulting you. So I am afraid that my uncle will be forced to attend to business for a matter of ten minutes or so; it will not take longer than that to read a letter."

"He will probably not read it at all when he sees what it is about. He will pore for hours, for days sometimes, over the most trifling affair or document of the Legation, but he never bothers about personal business matters. Why, whenever he sees that any of Uncle Pandeli's letters are written from the office, and are consequently on business or money matters, he always throws them into a drawer to open them later on, and as he forgets all about them afterwards, when the drawer gets too full or when we are starting for anywhere and I bring them to him, he says they are too old to be of any importance, and makes me tear them all up."

"And do you mean to say Uncle Pandeli has to wait in vain for his answers?"

"Oh, they are not the kind that require answering; just reports; 'We have sold this,' or 'We have transferred this stock to this railway bond,' or something of the kind."

"Well, Theodora, this is something that *does* require answering, and you *must* write. I do not suppose your letters will also be left unopened or not read."

"Of course not. But I am positive father will think, 'Considering Theodora went to Athens principally about this business, she might spare me the bother of it,' though, of course, he will be too polite to say so."

"Who will be too polite to say what?" asked her uncle as he entered the room.

Theodora explained at length.

"It was I," said her uncle, "who wrote to your father originally about this business, and also suggested that you should come to us. Suppose I write again to him to-night and put it all into a nutshell for him, so that he shall have no trouble at all, and you shall add a postscript telling him to be sure and answer at once. Will that do?"

Theodora pressed her face against his for a moment. "You are the dearest of uncles!"

"Your answer, little niece, is more flattering than relevant, but I take it to mean that you agree."

"Of course I do; you are always right!" Then turning to her cousin: "Which does not mean that you are not nearly always so too. Don't be vexed with me!"

Costa laughed. "Am I often vexed with you?"

"No. We are not a touchy family; I will say that for us. Now I am off, or Miss Burney will greet me with unflattering comparisons between Irish and Greek punctuality, as she used to do."

Left alone, father and son looked at each other and smiled.

"So, you will write?" asked Costa.

"Of course I will, though it strikes me that Theodora may be right about your uncle not taking the trouble to read the letter very thoroughly."

"Very probably," and Costa's smile became slightly contemptuous; "but in this case he must be made to read it, even if we have to write over and over again. Put a big 'important' at the top of your letter, father, and underline it in red ink. After all, this land is every bit of property Theodora is ever likely to have, and he *must* take the trouble to think about it. I have no patience with a man of his brains and capacity deliberately put-

ting everything to do with business disdainfully aside, as though it would soil his aristocratic hands."

"Are you not exaggerating just a little?"

"Not an atom. Why, he has even succeeded in imbuing Theodora with something of the same spirit. She has one of the clearest and most logical brains I have met, and yet just now Andriotti had to repeat all he wished her to know about the land, and the offer made for it, and the conditions of the sale, three or four times before she quite grasped all the details; and it was not as though she could not understand, but rather as if she did not think the subject worth her undivided attention. I give you my word, father, that he has made her believe, though she is probably unconscious of the fact, that there is something vaguely to be despised in businesslike qualities."

"But how?"

"Oh, most indirectly, of course. I have heard him refer to Uncle Pandeli as 'your good uncle,' or, 'my highly praiseworthy and energetic brother-in-law,' in a tone that would make you squirm. And time after time I have heard him repeat, as though it were some badge of nobility, that 'The Doukas were never money-makers'; they understood, he would add, the spending of it much better."

The elder Manelli laughed. "I should say he was about right there."

"Oh, perfectly; such an extremely ordinary fact as having insufficient money never struck him as an adequate reason for denying himself, or his daughter either, I am bound to say, any pleasure or new acquisition. And if Theodora tried to restrain him at all, or showed a little ordinary forethought or care for the morrow, he would smile gently, and remark: 'How wise you are, my dear daughter! How clearly one perceives the strain of prudent Chiote blood in your veins!' And she would blush as though detected in a fault. I should like to know how he

would have managed to live as he has done without Uncle Pandeli's 'prudent Chiote' management of his interests!"

Professor Manelli looked at his son with a whimsical little smile. "The 'Chiote blood' seems uppermost in you to-day!"

Costa let his arm fall across his father's shoulders as they both stood at the window looking out into the street.

"No, father; I think it is rather the hatred of injustice which I have inherited from you. I remember once," he went on, "I was passing through Vienna, and stayed at the Legation a few days, when Uncle Michael was minister there. I believe there had been one of the usual accumulations of bills, and various letters had been exchanged between him and Uncle Pandeli in London. I happened to be present when Uncle Michael received one of these letters, which evidently vexed him sufficiently to make him depart from his habitual courteous reserve. 'Really!' he exclaimed; 'your good uncle seems to imagine one can manage to live comfortably on an income of nothing a month, and even gives good advice as to how one may save on it!'"

The old professor laughed again.

"Of course it is funny," admitted Costa, half-grudgingly; "he knows how to turn things."

There was a short pause, and then Costa asked: "Shall you be free on Wednesday afternoon, father?"

"I think so. Why?"

"Because if you are, I promised Theodora to look up that young Philippides, and ask him to meet us that afternoon at the Numismatic Museum."

"Do you not think it would be more courteous to ask him to fix his own day and hour?"

"He himself, it seems, told Theodora to arrange for the visit whenever it suited us."

"Well, at all events, tell him that should any unfore-

seen occupation prevent him from being there on Wednesday, we shall quite understand. Our engagements are not so important as his."

"I will tell him," said Costa; "but I think he will be there."

CHAPTER VI

THE surmise proved correct, and when, in the early afternoon on Wednesday, Costa, with his father, Polymnia, and Theodora, reached the Museum, they found Metro with Monsieur Arnoux waiting for them at the top of the steps between the seated statues of Socrates and Plato.

Theodora begged that their inspection should begin chronologically, and that the Byzantine coins should be reached in their proper order.

At the very first tall cabinet of inlaid wood at which they stopped, Polymnia made them all laugh by asserting her firm conviction that the heavy flattened "talents" must have been the shields of the tiny Spartan boys, those who could not carry any heavier ones.

"I don't see why they should not be," she persisted; "how can you tell for certain? They look much more like little shields than coins."

Theodora was bending over the section of the coins of the ancient colonies and wondering at the delicate work of the tiny silver coin of the town of Massalia.

"Why," she cried, pointing to some very rough copies of it lying side by side, "did they have false coiners in those days also? Surely these are counterfeit."

"No, mademoiselle," answered Monsieur Arnoux; "for they would have deceived no one. They are primitive imitations by the ruder tribes of Gaul. Look! If you will give yourself the trouble to stoop a little more, you will see the names differ; Arles, Nîmes, Narbonne. You know what your ancestors used to say: 'He who is not Greek, is a barbarian.' And they were right. You lighted the torch for us of the West!"

Theodora smiled at him. "And how beautifully you

kept it burning! And how faithfully, now, when our own fire has burned low, you give us back of your light."

Metro flashed a look of comprehension, almost of gratitude, at her. France was his second country, and in some vague way he was glad that what Theodora had said should be pleasant for Monsieur Arnoux to hear.

They passed on to the coins of Macedonia; they studied the gold and silver and copper coins of Alexander the Great, or more simply, as in his own time, "Alexander the king," the young, eager head, in the simple, unadorned helmet. They passed on to the coins of Phocis, Bœotia, Orchomenos, Platæa, Amphissa, Locris; but there were so many epochs, so many *archontes* for each epoch, that Polymnia got weary, and enticed Monsieur Arnoux to one of the cabinets on the other side, where some hanging strips of thin beaten gold excited her curiosity. Professor Manelli had gravitated to the Egyptian section and was explaining to Costa the difference between the symbol for "Ka" the astral body, and the symbol for "Ab" the heart, and how a small sign added to the latter gave "abiding of heart" as the old Egyptians expressed "patience."

Theodora, looking up from the long series of Athenian coins with the constantly reappearing owl on the recumbent urn, found Metro's eyes fixed upon her. She was quite accustomed to find people looking at her, especially abroad, where her type was more unusual, but this man did not turn away his gaze when he met her glance, only the long, thin face flushed duskily, and his eyes brightened.

"I was looking at you!" he said.

This seemed so obvious that Theodora found no answer before he spoke again. "I am sure that before your ancestors reigned in Byzantium, the family of Doukas was not of Roman origin, as so many of the imperial families were, but purely Greek."

"Ah, you have read the 'Familles augustes' of Ducange."

"No; I do not know the book."

"Then, why are you so positive?"

"Because the old Greek type is so pure in you. Not only in general outline, but in all the details, even to the sweep of your hair, just here." And bending, he passed his hand over the black hair, where it showed most, under the upturned brim of the brown hat she wore.

Most women would have been startled, if not angry, but Theodora understood instinctively that Metro would have been most bewildered had she shown by any sign that his gesture was unusual. She only said:—

"My father has often told me so." And then, with a slight onward step, she passed to the next glass case. "Now I feel at home again," she said, laying her hand upon it. "Here are the Byzantine coins!"

"Yes; all this case, and the next two, after it."

"Oh!" she exclaimed, bending over them; "how many! And how beautiful! And how strange it is to see all these, about which I have read so often, and which I have seen engraved, and photographed, and drawn, over and over again! See! There are the Julius Crispus coins in that corner; and down here the beaten gold plaques of Leon Isaurus. I never thought they were so big; measurements never give one quite a correct impression; at least not to me."

Then she bent lower over the second case. "Here are all the Doukas! It seems so strange to me. Is that one a coin of Michael VII? I can scarcely see the letters from the reflection on the glass from the skylight; Dou . . . ka . . . Pa . . . ra . . . pina . . . ces."

But while she was slowly spelling the inscription, Metro unlocked the case, lifted the glass top on its hinges, and, taking out two or three of the massive gold coins, placed them in her hands.

"Oh! I thank you! But is it allowed? Ah, yes, for you it is different, of course; but it is very kind of you. This, 'Michael Douka cum Maria, 1071 to 1078,' is a much better preserved coin than the one my father has. Here the empress looks quite pretty; in ours, part of the chin is rubbed off, and that gives her a stupid look. Oh, I wish my father could be here with me! — with us," she corrected. "Of course he has seen them all, but I should like him to see them again with me."

"Perhaps your father may come to you here."

"No," said Theodora, hesitatingly; "I think not; you see he —" There was a slight pause; and then, breaking off her sentence, she said, holding out the coins, "Will you please put them back?" And as he did so silently, she pointed to the next case: "Surely those are Byzantine also, but what is that winged figure? I do not recognize it."

"Those are the coins of St. Sophia and of the Patriarchate."

"Ah, our collection stops at the taking of the city. Tell me about these."

And Metro told her of those and of many others. He showed her the coins of the Latin Dukes of Athens, and the coins of the Ionian islands, and the Epidaurus coins with the head of Zeus, and the bear on the coins of Mantinea, and the coins of Arcadia with the swiftly running Hermes, none of which did she know at all, and about which he gave quick, light sketches. It was the first time in all his life that he had talked on a footing of equality with an educated woman of her age and condition, and there was a surprise and delight for him in all she knew and understood, and an almost equal delight in all she did not know and wanted to learn from him.

When by slow degrees they arrived at the raised platform at the farther end, they found that Costa and his father had joined Polymnia and Monsieur Arnoux, and that all four were looking with interest at the hanging

masks, terrible and grotesque, worn by the actors of the old dramas. Polymnia seemed more interested in these than in anything else she had seen.

"But we must go," said Theodora. "It is past four, and Zoe told us to come early."

So they came down the steps together, and all, except Monsieur Arnoux, turned to the left up the Avenue of the University.

"Are you coming our way?" Professor Manelli asked of Metro, and Metro answered yes, that he had to meet a friend at Zacharatos's café in the Square.

At the corner of the Grande Bretagne their ways separated. Metro had promised to obtain a permit for them to go up to the Acropolis on the second night of the full moon, which would be on the next Saturday, and he asked them now to mention this to Zoe and to her cousin, in case they cared to come, as the permit could be made to include any number.

"You will be with us, of course?" said Costa; "have you arranged where we are to meet?"

"But," — and Metro hesitated a moment, — "there is no necessity really that I should come also. There is nothing to explain at night; one goes up there only to look at the beauty of the light."

"No necessity whatever; not the slightest," said Costa quickly; "but I was not talking of necessity; only of the great pleasure you would give us by joining our party."

"You are very good. I will come, certainly. Would it suit you that we should meet here, outside the Palace, at a quarter to ten on Saturday night?"

"Perfectly," said Costa, answering for all.

Then Metro took leave of them, and turned down the Square to the right.

The Laras' house was known as one of the most successful of those built about fifty years ago in Athens. It

was beautifully proportioned on an antique model, two-storied, with a low balustrade running round the flat roof. Its mellowed whiteness stood out in high relief against the background of tall trees. Andrea Lara had been one of the first to bring over a gardener from Rome; and Italian gardeners understand, as none others do quite so well, that a garden to be beautiful must above all look as though it was intended to be lived in, just as much as the house which opens on to it.

There were square stone seats set in the shadows of the larger trees, and others, crescent-shaped, against formal masses of dark foliage. There were old vines grown simply for their shade, and immense unclipped rosebushes spreading out long branches laden with late yellow roses. There were plane trees, and old walnut trees near a little reservoir at the back. There were great pine trees round the house just near enough, yet not too near, with here and there the sharpness of a cypress tree set knowingly in their midst. There was an arbor overgrown with Banksia roses, and a white pergola at the farther end recalled the general tone and lines of the house.

The manservant who came to open the one side of the wide iron gates told Polymnia in answer to her inquiry that the ladies were in and expecting them. They went up the marble steps from the garden, passed under the colonnade, and entered a wide hall which seemed dim at first after the bright light outside. The man threw open the door beside a big fireplace, and Zoe limped hurriedly out to meet them.

"I thought you would never come."

The library was a comfortable, big, lived-in room with well-used leather armchairs, a huge writing table, and a great many books.

From a sofa, at the other end of the room, the elder Kyria Lara, Zoe's unmarried aunt, rose and billowed majestically forward to meet the visitors. She was a fat

— very fat — woman of about sixty. Everything in her face was too small, and the features were clustered all together in a great expanse of cheek. She had small blue eyes, a disproportionately short nose, and a little round chin above a ponderous double one which went all round the face. There was at first sight a pseudo-motherly air about her, but this was contradicted on closer observation by the discontented lines of the forehead and the thin, loose lips. She had small, cushiony hands with tapering finger ends, of which she was very proud.

After every one was seated, the old lady turned to Theodora. "My brother and Zoe have told me so much about you since their return that I have been quite anxious to meet you. I once had the pleasure of meeting your father, at a banquet in London. It was when I used to live in Manchester, and we had gone up to London on the 25th of March for this national meeting. Your father was only first secretary then, and a handsome young man he was, my dear. I was young myself at that time, of course, and I had fair hair, which I believe was very much admired. I remember quite well that your father stooped forward from his place at the table and said to me —"

Zoe jumped up suddenly. "Here is father!"

A man of middle height, with a fair beard turning gray, stepped in from the garden through one of the open windows. He had a gentle, pleasant, though rather shy, manner, and his movements, as he went from one to the other, were rather slow and diffident.

"Sit down, my dear Andrea! Sit down!" said his sister sharply; and one felt that it was on the tip of her tongue to add, "Don't fidget, and let me get on with my story!"

Andrea Lara had never been very clear as to how it had happened that his sister Virginia lived with him, and had done so for the last sixteen years. When his wife died it had seemed so natural to every one that his only unmarried

sister, living in Manchester with an older married sister, should have come to the rescue at once. It had seemed so to him also at the time, and he had been grateful to her. After the first few months he had, however, expected that she would return to England. But the change, from being a rather unwanted maiden sister in the Manchester home to being the sole mistress of her brother's prosperous and perfectly appointed household, was a very pleasant one, and she had never suggested leaving it. So she had stayed always. That the little, dark, limping child of two should from the very first have resisted all her coaxing, with averted face and shrill, frightened voice, was of course only an unfortunate detail, due, according to Aunt Virginia, to a mistaken early education. Her late sister-in-law, "poor Aspasia," as she had told all comers, had always been too weak to oppose the child's silly whims and fancies. She required a firmer hand.

As soon as Andrea Lara had seated himself, his sister turned once more to Theodora. "As I was just saying, your father bent forward in his seat and said to me —"

But a new interruption came in the shape of the man-servant, who announced that tea was served in the dining-room, and when they had all passed through the folding doors and seated themselves, Aunt Virginia was so occupied in pouring out tea, ordering coffee, and pressing every one to try everything on the table, that Theodora never heard, after all, what it was that her father had said to the then youthful "Aunt Virginia," whose fair hair had been so much admired.

Professor Manelli was seated next to his host, and after having tried and abandoned two or three subjects of conversation, was talking politics to him.

Suddenly Andrea Lara noticed Theodora sitting silent at his right, and turned to her. "You have had good news from your father, I hope?"

"I have had no news at all," said Theodora with a

little sigh. "My father does not care much for letter-writing, I know, but it is more than a fortnight now since his last letter; and I am a little worried."

"You must not be worried! I was just telling your uncle that it was announced yesterday in Parliament that in a month's time we are to have a change in the postal arrangements, which will give us a mail to and from the rest of Europe almost every day except Saturday, which will be a great boon for us business men; but, you understand, there may be a little irregularity in the post until the new system begins."

Aunt Virginia joined in from the other end of the table. "I must say," she announced in a decided tone, "that I consider it very stupid, and a great waste of public money, to make such a change for a month only; why cannot they find out first whether the country requires the change or not, and then decide at once."

Professor Manelli and Costa disguised a smile, and Andrea Lara corrected his sister nervously.

"The new arrangement is not to be tried for a month only, Virginia; it is to begin definitely *in* a month from now."

"Excuse *me*," said Aunt Virginia sharply; "it is to be on trial for a month."

"But no, my dear; that would be ridiculous."

"Exactly what I said, and a great waste of money also, as they will require, I suppose, so many temporary new postmen."

"Yanni!" said Andrea Lara to the servant who had just brought in some hot water, "find me to-day's newspaper, please!"

The man left the room, and Aunt Virginia went on to explain gently that her brother was always in such a hurry to get to his bank in the morning that it was no wonder he did not manage to read the newspaper properly.

When Yanni returned with the paper, Andrea Lara found the Parliamentary report, ran his finger down a column, and stopping halfway, folded the paper, and, leaving his seat, brought it round to his sister's place.

"This is what I saw," he said; "now, please find me your version."

Aunt Virginia took the paper and pored over it for a few moments, turning the sheets backwards and forwards, three or four times. At last she let it drop on the floor beside her.

"Well," she said with a tired air; "the question is not worth so much fuss; nor can the discussion be very entertaining for our friends. I must have seen it in some other paper."

Her brother shrugged his shoulders and remained silent.

Zoe suddenly began to whistle, and then stopped short and asked: "Shall we go into the garden?"

She and Theodora were the last to step out of the long window. At the turn of a path they came upon Costa Manelli alone; he had evidently stopped behind to admire a rambler rose which had been trained round the trunk of a pine tree and whose clusters of pale pink were already mingling with the lower branches.

"I did not know this kind of rambler rose was already in Greece," he said as they came up.

"A correspondent of my father's, who knows his mania for new flowers, sent him over some cuttings in a tin box from England," said Zoe. Then she added hastily, almost ungraciously, "If you like, I can get you some cuttings from this one."

"Thank you; that is very kind of you," answered Manelli lightly. "But you see I have no permanent habitation here. I dare say, though, that Polymnia would be very grateful for some." Then, turning to Theodora: "You should see these ramblers in London! — to what a degree of perfection they have been brought! At the James

Leslies' at Holland Park the garden is a perfect picture with the various kinds and colors they have got together."

"James Leslie? That was the man one of the Crommelin girls married, did she not?"

"Yes."

"What is their house like? Those girls were always so extra up-to-date."

"Oh, the very latest, of course. Everything shiny white, stairs, walls, ceiling. I believe," he added gravely, "that the frying pans were returned to the ironmonger's because there was a slight tint of gray in the white enamel."

Theodora laughed. "You do keep so beautifully serious when you talk rubbish, Costa! I wish I could do it."

There was no end to her inquiries and to Costa's answers, once they got launched on the wide sea of acquaintances in common. Zoe limped along silently beside them. At a certain moment Theodora mentioned a Royal garden party which had closed the season brilliantly.

Zoe looked up at Manelli. "But you did not go to that one."

"No," assented Manelli absently; "it was the day Andoni Chrysati was so ill, and I had to stay with him."

"But how did *you* know, Zoe?" asked Theodora. "Did Polymnia tell you?"

Zoe picked a leaf from a rosebush as she answered. "No, I happened to see an old English newspaper with a list of the guests!"

Just then a dog barked in the lower part of the garden, at the back where the kitchen and the servants' quarters were.

"That's Baloo!" said Theodora; "I should know his heavy, gruff bark anywhere. How is it we have not seen him yet?"

"He has been washed in honor of your visit," explained

Zoe, "and they are keeping him there at the back until he dries. When are the little girls coming to see him? They wanted to come very much."

"Oh, any day you like; I will ask Polymnia to let me bring them."

"I would not bring them if I were you," said Costa.

"Why not?"

"Because they are not at all accustomed to dogs, and they *are* accustomed to touching and hugging whatever pleases them. The result will be that they will be nursing and squeezing this dog as hard as they can, and getting their hands and faces quite close to his mouth, and you know how dangerous that can be."

"Baloo has never bitten a fly, and he lets the cat go to sleep between his paws," flashed out Zoe indignantly. "But I suppose you consider it safer to let children grow up into little cowards!"

Before Costa could make any answer, they came upon the rest of the party, seated on one of the stone seats. Aunt Virginia was complaining to Professor Manelli how impossible it was becoming to find a servant with a decent memory, how they all forgot by the evening whatever they had been told in the morning.

"As I told Calliope, yesterday, Kyrie Manelli, when she forgot for the hundredth time that I wish the bottle with the drop measure to be put by my bed one night, and the box of pills, the other — 'You must have suffered very badly at some time in your life,' I said to her, 'from typhoid fever, which has such evil effects on the memory!' — and do you know what she answered? Now, can you guess?" She paused impressively, and waited until the professor answered that he certainly could not. "Well, if you can believe it, the girl said, that no, glory be to God, she had never had any of those bad illnesses! She did not even see that I was talking ironically; you understand, Professor Manelli, not even that!"

At this moment a sudden yelp of pain came from the back part of the house, and a maid came running toward them from the flower garden.

"Kyria Zoe! It is the dog! I had wrapped him up in the cloth to dry, and Yanni had the big tray in his hands; and not that I did not tell him in time, — you can ask him himself, — 'Look where you step!' I called out, 'the dog is there'; and he said, 'Am I blind, then?' and on he goes, and catches his foot in the cloth and almost drops the tray, but he just caught it in time luckily, as all the best cups were on it; only the big sugar basin slid off the edge and broke, and the pieces fell on the dog's paws and cut them so that they look as though you had just dipped them in blood."

Polymnia and Theodora exclaimed in pity, and Andrea Lara gave a little "tch" of annoyance, and rose from his seat.

Zoe said nothing, only bit her lips and started hurriedly for the lower garden, but the quicker she tried to walk the more she halted. She turned to the maid.

"Calliope, you and the cook bring him here to me! It will be quicker."

"My dear child — " protested her aunt.

"And bring some hot water," added Zoe, "and some rags; and be quick!"

"We'll bring him immediately, Kyria Zoe; don't you trouble yourself." And the girl ran off.

She returned almost at once at a slower pace, panting a little under the weight of a fine black poodle, his fore paws wrapped in a rough towel. The cook, a stout, elderly woman, followed carrying another towel, a basin, and a can of water. The dog's howls had changed to a prolonged whine, and as the maid put him down on the path before Zoe, he struggled to free his paws.

"Now, really, Zoe," began her aunt, as Zoe bent over him; "just think how you will mess your dress if you

touch him, and I dare say it is not a particularly pleasant sight for your visitors. You might be a little more considerate." Then, as Zoe continued unwinding the towel in silence: "That dog is always in the way; such a heavy, lumbering creature as he is!" She glanced at the servants, who stood waiting, and, turning to her guests, added in very Lancashire English learned in Manchester: "And I must say Yanni is a careful man as a rule."

"Well," said Zoe, in the same language, "he was damnably careless this time!"

She began to pour the warm water into the basin, but Costa, who had been standing by the stone seat, without speaking crossed the path, and took the can out of her hands. He put it down and knelt on the ground beside Baloo.

"Let me see to him!" he said rather shortly; "I know something about dogs. Give me the clean rags, and let one of the servants get some disinfectant, if you have any in the house."

Zoe gave the order, and then stood perfectly still, one hand resting on the trunk of a big pine tree, looking down at Costa as he very deftly drew out one after another of the larger bits of china from the dog's paws.

"Take care!" she said suddenly, at one moment when he bent lower over the dog. "Are you not afraid he might bite you?"

"Let him!" answered Manelli rather roughly, as he went on with his work without looking at her.

When he had finished, and Baloo's paws were securely bound up in many wrappings, he stood up. "Keep him quiet if you can, and let some one see that he does not bite off his bandages. May I wash my hands somewhere?"

Andrea Lara hurried forward. "Come into my dressing-room! And," he added, passing his arm through the younger man's, "really, I scarcely know how to thank you for your very kind help."

"I am glad I happened to be here," answered Manelli simply, and the two men walked off together.

Zoe stood for a moment looking after them, and then made a movement to follow.

"Where are you going?" asked Theodora.

"I want to tell him . . . that I was a brute to say that just now; . . . and to thank him."

"Costa does not care much for thanks; besides, you can tell him afterwards. I want you now."

And she led her toward the library window. "Come in and play to me!"

CHAPTER VII

Zoe played one of Chopin's preludes, — the shortest one — and the great wide chords, grand, harmonious, and massive, were struck with all the strength and the splendid attack of a man and of a talented man. From Chopin, she passed to Grieg's "Prinzessin," and from that, to one of Massenet's "Scènes alsaciennes," ending with Gluck's minuet from the "Iphigénie."

When she had played this last, Professor Manelli and Polymnia got up and went to the piano, but Theodora remained where she was, quite silent, with an almost dazed look in her eyes.

Andrea Lara, who, with Costa, had come into the room a few minutes before, came up to her. "Did you —" he began; and then he caught sight of her face, and being a music-lover himself, he understood. "You had not heard Zoe play before?"

"No; I knew she played; I had been told — but I never dreamed of — of this."

"Theodora!" called out Zoe from the piano, "what is my father saying to you to bring that rapt look to your face? Or can it be the effect of my playing? If so, I shall be very proud."

"You may be as proud as you like; for it is! But it is more than that," she continued, coming close to the piano; "it is the delightful feeling of a long-cherished dream coming true!"

"What dream?"

"Whenever I go with my father to a concert to hear a really good pianist, we always say, coming out, if only one could have such a player at home — have him ready

to play whenever one asks him, and be able to listen as one likes, in a familiar room, in perfect silence. It spoils half one's pleasure to have to listen tightly packed in rows. And now — you have promised to play to me whenever I like!"

Zoe flushed a little, and her eyes shone. "I shall always like to play to you." Her hands fell on the keys again, and she began playing one of the most popular songs of the last summer's review with a gayety and a swing about it absolutely irresistible. "That is Nasso's favorite," she said as she played; "he sings it by the hour."

The two were alone at the piano when Costa Manelli detached himself from the group at the farther end of the long room, and came toward them.

"Theodora," he said, "did you give Philippides's message about Saturday?"

"No," answered his cousin; "I had forgotten." And she told Zoe what Metro had arranged about the moonlight expedition.

"Saturday," repeated Zoe; "yes, I think we are free. I will ask my father if he cares; or perhaps I might . . ." She broke off in the middle of her sentence, and through the gloom of the room Theodora noticed her lips whiten a little as she pressed them together. Then, very suddenly, she rose from her seat at the piano, and held out her hand half-timidly toward Costa Manelli. "Please — will you — forgive me — for speaking as I did in the garden. You were so good to Baloo; and I never even thanked you!"

She stammered, and hesitated; she, the ready-tongued, as though she were a little child sent to beg pardon of an offended elder.

Manelli neither denied nor protested; he simply bent low over the hand she offered him, though without touching it with his lips, and said in rather a light tone of voice: "Ladies are always forgiven in advance."

Nothing more was said, for the room was suddenly

lighted, and the manservant asked permission to pass behind them to close the shutters.

Professor Manelli and the others came up to the piano.

"My dear young lady," began the former, "will you humor an old man who loves music, but who loved it before the fashion of German classical music came to Greece?"

Zoe sat down at once. "What shall I play for you? I have all the old operas here for my father's benefit — 'Rigoletto,' 'Lucia,' 'Puritani,' 'Norma,' 'Ballo in Maschera,' 'Cenerentola,' 'Cosi fan tutti.' What would you like?"

"No, not quite so far back. Since you are so good, I should like 'Carmen' or 'Tosca.'"

In a moment the room was filled with melody, and Zoe was playing Bizet and Puccini as beautifully as she had played Schumann and Gluck, perhaps more beautifully, for Greek always was, and always will be, more akin to the Latin than to the Saxon.

"We must really be going," said Polymnia at last; "do you know it is nearly eight o'clock! We have been here hours: this has been quite an Armenian visit."

"Then what of Saturday?" asked Theodora.

"Yes," said Andrea Lara; "your uncle was telling me of your kind proposition. Unfortunately, I am dining at the French Legation that evening; if my nephew is up in Athens, he will bring Zoe, if not, perhaps" — with a doubtful glance at his sister — "Virginia may feel inclined to come; it is a long time since either of us has had the opportunity of seeing the Parthenon by moonlight; and," he added, with a comprehensive smile at Polymnia, Theodora, and the two men, "in such company."

"However long it may be since I have had this pleasure, it is scarcely suitable to my age" — for Aunt Virginia became old whenever it was convenient — "to go risking my bones, climbing over steep rocks in the middle of the night, moonlight or no moonlight!"

Her brother laughed. "It must be long since you have been there, certainly. Steep rocks! Why, my dear Virgina, there is a comfortable broad carriage road, and you can drive right up to the top."

Aunt Virginia drew in her lips until there was only a tight line across her face.

"I am perfectly aware that there is a road, of a kind. But for my part, I always prefer walking over the difficult parts; and the pine needles on the rocks make it very slippery."

"But," persisted her brother, "the pines and the rocks are entirely outside the road, even if you walk up; you need never go near them, unless you particularly wish to do so."

"My dear Andrea, I think it is you who have not been up to the Acropolis for a long time! I remember quite well that there are some difficult parts of the road, impossible to avoid."

She repeated her opinion in the elaborately gentle tones that Zoe called her "God-give-me-patience" voice.

"But I assure you —"

"That will do, Andrea. I am sure this very useless discussion cannot interest anybody. I am sorry," she added, turning to Professor Manelli, "that I cannot be of your party on Saturday, much as I should enjoy it under other circumstances; but even in my youth I was never a good climber. I am too short-sighted."

She ended the discussion with a quiet assurance which Theodora felt was enough to make even her brother, the mildest of men, long to throw something at her head.

"If Zoe," continued her aunt, "particularly wishes to tire herself with the ascent, her new friends will probably allow her to join them, even without me."

"There is not the slightest difficulty," hurriedly put in Professor Manelli. "We will call for her in good time, and bring her back to you safely."

"New friends, indeed!" muttered Zoe, as she limped down the steps into the cool darkness of the garden beside Theodora; "as though *she* were an old one!"

When they had all left, Zoe stood for a moment swinging the iron gate to and fro. In the wonderfully bright moonlight of October almost every shade of green in the garden was as clearly discernible as in daylight. The masses of the big pines threw heavy shadows round their roots, and the feathery mimosas stood out in glimmering green against the blackness of the monumental cypresses.

"Torna caro ideale, torna un' instante,
A sorridermi ancora.
E a me risplendera nel tuo sembiante
Una novella aurora."

A voice came singing up the avenue, to the accompaniment of a quick, swinging stride. Then a sudden interruption.

"Zoe! Don't shut the gate! It's I."

And Nasso passed in and, taking the gate from her hand, shut it with a clang. "And how is it I find you here, fair maiden? Are you musing in the moonlight?"

"No; calming down."

"Oh!" — a long "oh" of comprehension; "what has she being doing?"

"Nothing."

"Saying, then? Don't snap my head off!" And he let a big young arm fall across her shoulders.

"All right; I won't. It would be a shame, such a good-looking one as it is!" And she rubbed her cheek against the rough cloth of his coat.

"Theodora Douka and the Manellis were here, and she managed to entrap father into two separate discussions."

"Ah, I see! Uncle does get caught sometimes; he has not learned our wisdom yet. Did the others stay long?"

"Yes; they have only just left. They asked us to go

up to the Acropolis with them on Saturday by moonlight. Can you come?"

"No; I am going down to the ship to-morrow morning."

"So soon! But you were down for ages quite lately. You *might* stay until Monday, or at least until Sunday evening. I know you are not on duty this week; so why must you?"

"My dear girl, it does n't pay up in town now, with this summer weather lasting so long. You take your coffee or your ice in the evening, that means two drachmæ; you go out for coolness in the evening after dinner, and sit down somewhere, another two; you take a carriage home after midnight, two more; and if you happen to find your tram full at noon, you give another drachma to a victoria. There go your seven drachmæ a day. You were never good at arithmetic, but calculate, my dear; calculate to what it amounts a week!"

"I should like to know why you count two drachmæ, whenever you sit down to take anything. Whatever you have, one is enough, tip included."

"Oh, well, you know, one is never alone at a table, and— "

"I know, little hollowhead, I know! and it is always some one else who sits at your table, and never you at any one else's."

"Oh, nonsense! But, anyhow, it all mounts up."

The only thing that saved Nasso from living in constant financial difficulties was his horror of indebtedness. For this trait he took no sort of credit to himself, rather regretting it than otherwise. "It's a beastly nuisance," he would say sometimes to Zoe, "that when I have unpaid bills, I cannot get any proper enjoyment out of my month's pay until I drop one or two notes on account with my tailor or bootmaker. Lots of the other fellows don't bother until they have to; I wish I was n't built

that way; it leaves so little for the rest of the month, you see."

So when that little was spent, if the month was still young, Nasso would be lost from public view, staying on board his ship at Salamis, away from the expenses and temptations of Athens, until next pay day came round again. His uncle would have paid any reasonable debts for him with pleasure; even his Aunt Virginia, though she might have grumbled a little, would certainly have helped him; and as for Zoe, who always had far more pocket money than she required, she had entreated him again and again to accept a loan at least; but he never would let any of them help him. "One slips so easily," he told Zoe once, "into the habit of expecting help, and it 's a nasty habit to get into with your own people. Besides, you know," he added, "there is nothing like the quiet of one's cabin or the deserted messroom on board ship for studying up anything. I should never open a book if it were not for my periodical retirements."

Zoe knew this by long experience, but this evening, leaning against his arm, as they slowly mounted the marble steps to the house, she tried once more.

"Nasso, it is I who particularly want you to stay up in town until Saturday."

"What is the use of saying that? Would I ask better than to stay if I could?"

"You can!"

"My dear child, what is the matter with you to-night? Do I generally require so much persuasion?"

"No; but since it would be exclusively for me that you would be staying, you might let me — only just this once — help with the expenses."

"In other words, you want to pay me to stay; to turn me into a sort of professional chaperon in fact. That's a nice thing to say to a fellow!"

"But, Nasso — "

"But, Zoe —"

She jerked her arm out of his, and, limping heavily to one of the marble columns of the porch, leaned her head against it, and suddenly burst into tears.

Poor Nasso stood aghast. He scarcely ever remembered seeing Zoe cry, even when they had quarreled and fought as little children. He strode over and tried to pull her hands down.

"Zoe, don't cry! Don't, my little child! Don't now!"

"You — you are so obstinate, you make me cry."

"No, but do try and see this thing properly once for all. Human nature is human nature; you can't change it. If I did as you want, little by little, whenever I came to the house, or if I happened to come twice in one week, you would begin to ask yourself, 'How much does he want this time?'"

"Oh, Nasso! Never! Never! How horrid you are!"

"You could n't help it. The question might come to you quite nicely, quite naturally, but it would be there, and I should just hate it. Of course, you understand, I am talking of a normal state of things. If I were in a hole or in absolute need of money, for some reason or other, to whom should I come at once, if not to my 'little sister'?"

This was a name he very rarely gave her, and Zoe, half-pacified by it, ceased sobbing, but her eyes were still streaming as she lifted them to his.

"That means never. You never will be in a hole! You hate debts, and you never play cards!"

Nasso threw back his head and roared with laughter. "Yes; I advise you to cry over that, I do really!"

And he laughed so loud and so long that she ended by laughing with him, until the servant opened the hall door to search for Zoe and announce dinner, and they went into the house together.

CHAPTER VIII

The friend whom Metro met at Zacharatos's café was a young man of one of the oldest families of Zante, Petro Dandolo, by name, an archæologist by taste and an amateur excavator, who had lately been unearthing the site of one of the less-known temples of Artemis in Asia Minor, and who had much to tell about it.

Metro was an excellent listener, and the two sat so long over their empty coffee cups that when at last they thought of dinner, it was long past nine o'clock, and far too late to expect to find anything fit to eat at the Averoff. So Dandolo proposed that they should go to his house and get some supper. He lived with his mother and a young sister in one of the few really old houses of Athens in the street of Germanus of old Patras.

When he gave the address to the driver of the victoria which he called, the man turned round on the box seat and smiled at him paternally. "Do not trouble yourself, Kyrie Petro; are we strangers in Athens, that we should not know your house?"

"Go on, then!" said Dandolo, climbing in, "and drive like lightning, for we are dying of hunger."

"But," said Metro, when they had started off, "will it not be a trouble to the ladies that you should take me to your house at this hour?"

Dandolo answered with the combined courtesy of his family traditions and of his native island: "It would always be a great pleasure to my mother and my sister to receive you, my dear friend, and never a trouble at any hour, but as it happens they are not returning from Zante until next week, so our old cook, Zafirina, who keeps the

house and looks after me, will get all we want. She is one of those old island servants whom you cannot find nowadays, and I assure you, if I were to wake her up at midnight and tell her to prepare a dinner for twenty people, she would manage it somehow."

Zafirina proved equal to her reputation, and Metro tasted chicken *pasta* for the first time and found it excellent.

He sat afterwards with Dandolo in the latter's little low-ceilinged study, and was shown Giallina's water-color sketch of Adelina, Petro's pretty golden-haired sister, and pored with him over the old illuminated family records dating back to Venetian days in the Ionian islands and to Venice before that.

"Ah," said Metro, primed with lately acquired knowledge, "of course you old families of the Ionian islands did not get your papers and documents destroyed or lost at the Revolution. Tell me, Petro,"—and he clasped his hands together and pressed his lower lip with them, a trick he had when talking of something which interested him, —"tell me what does it feel like to belong to an old family? To be able to say, this was my great-grandfather, and this my great-great-grandfather, and this, his father before him, and they were all honorable men, and many of them counted in their country's doings, and their opinions were always taken in war or in time of peace; and to go farther back still, and read books and look at paintings, and say, this great fighter, this great painter, this man who made good laws, this man to whom his country raised a monument, were all my ancestors, and I am of the same blood as they were? It seems to me that in some way it must make a man feel differently from those who have naught to remember."

"Well, I don't know," said Dandolo; "of course one gets taught all the usual 'Noblesse oblige' theory by one's parents, and in a sort of a way one feels bound to pass it

on to one's children in turn. But unless a man is born preferring white to black and the straight to the crooked, I fancy it does n't make much difference. I have seen men descended most undoubtedly from very old and famous families whom I would not touch with a pair of tongs."

"Is it so?" And Metro leaned forward with a wondering look in his eyes. "You see, I have known so few — and I thought — " Then he broke off suddenly: "But these of whom you speak must have been despicable beasts!"

Dandolo smiled. Metro's simple directness always amused and attracted him at the same time.

"They were pretty pieces of dirt, certainly."

"Because, you see," Metro went on, "if you are alone, and if you hold a light and you put it out, you are a clumsy fool; but if it has been kept lighted by lines of people before you, and it is given into your hand, to light all those who are to follow you, and you put it out, and break the line and leave the rest in darkness, then you are a criminal!"

Dandolo looked at the long, dark face, at the deep, sunken eyes flashing with indignation, at the strong curve of the chin, and let his hand fall on his friend's arm. "You, Metro, will be of those who light the first torch before they pass it on to others. You are of the stuff of which ancestors are made."

It was quite late when Metro walked home, and his mind was full of his talk with Dandolo. But when he slept he dreamed that he was back in his island of Poros.

He was walking down the hill from the Temple of Poseidon. Very far down below him, on the uninhabited side of the island, the sea rippled in the sun, and circled and flowed round the pebbles of the great open beach of Vayonia. He breathed the scent of the bruised thyme under his tread, and put aside as he passed, a slim, young ailanthus tree which stood in his way.

For some unknown reason, he felt anxious to get down to the sea with the least possible delay. But when he was down on the shore, his feet slipped on the loose stones and buried themselves in the dry seaweed, and he cried aloud in vexation.

Then suddenly he saw, standing beside a rock at a little distance from him, Theodora Douka; and as he saw her he knew that he had been searching for her. She advanced to meet him, and he saw that she was wearing the loose gold-embroidered robes and the heavy gem-encrusted tiara of a Byzantine empress. She smiled at him in silence, and he stretched out his hand and touched once more the sweep of black hair that lay along her cheek.

The thought, which had never occurred to him in his waking moments, came to him now: "Perhaps I should not touch it!"

Then she held out both hands to him with a very tender smile, such as he had never seen on her face, and answered his unspoken thought: "Why should you not touch it? Is it not yours? And have I not come to your own country, to be yours also?"

He awoke in the early dawn with these words ringing in his ears. Every intonation of her voice was still clear and distinct in his memory; every detail of difference in the inflection of the two questions; the surprise of "Why should you not touch it?" and the confident assurance of "Have I not come to your own country, to be yours also?" He had a curious consciousness that his dream had made some great difference, as though a great gulf had been bridged in one leap.

The following day and the one after that, he forgot the dream during most of his working hours, but it returned to him whenever he lay down to rest. On the Saturday, when he recalled his appointment for the Acropolis in the evening, he found himself trying again and again to con-

jure up before his mind the lines of the serious young face, and wondering whether anything could bring to it the exact look that he had seen in his dream.

Nevertheless, he was the last to reach the meeting place between the Palace and the sunken garden of the Square. Zoe, who could not stand long without fatigue, was seated on one of the benches at the top of the long flight of stone steps which leads up from the garden, and the others were standing around her.

"Ah, you are all here!" said Metro, glancing at his watch after he had greeted them; "yes, I am late; a man prevented me. Shall we start at once so as not to lose the best hour?"

That was all. It never occurred to him to offer any apology for the delay; to express regret that he had kept the ladies waiting for him. He had given them the reason; a man had prevented him at the last moment; what more could be necessary?

"Yes," assented Professor Manelli, smiling a little, "it would be a pity to lose the best hour. Costa, will you call two carriages? There are several waiting on the other side of the Square, before the Grande Bretagne."

They left the carriages at the foot of the hill and walked leisurely up to the Porte Beulé, where a bent old guardian, half asleep in his little hut inside the gate, let them in.

The great columns of the Propylæa rose high above their heads. The "far seen front," the "τηλαυγὲς πρόσωπον," which Pericles had demanded for the entrance to the great rock, had lost its golden daylight tint, and was shining white and almost transparent.

As she put her foot on the first step, Theodora caught hold of Costa's arm. "Listen, Costa!

> "'An ivory stair climbs up the silver rocks
> Through roofless columns of a marble gate;
> This is the rock of Athens, reared sublime
> Crowned with quick stars above the night of time.'"

"Yes," said her cousin, "I know; but I think I like the other verse still better:—

> "'Lo, with a mystic radiance round its scars
> Hardly a ruin in this healing light,
> The fairest pile that ever human hearts
> Built to enshrine their young ideal mood!'"

"You two with your poetry," cried Polymnia, "come along, or we shall be here until morning!"

But Zoe, who was climbing painfully up, leaning on Theodora's arm, pressed closer to her. "Whose is it?"

"Rodd's. 'An Attic Night,' from the book called the 'Violet Crown.'"

"I wonder if Eleftheroudaki has it."

"I am afraid not." And Theodora put her hand under the other's elbow to support her better. "But I will write to London and get it for you."

"Oh, Theodora, why should you?"

"Let me! I want to give it to you."

In the open space beyond the great columns, every fragment of marble was as clearly discernible as in the daytime, but the light was bluer, and less blinding, and the heavy masses of shadow were less transparent and more mysterious. Except for the guardian who had let them in, they were the only human beings on the rock that night, and the feeling of intrusion, as they slowly ascended the sloping plane to the great temples, was such that even Polymnia's voice was hushed. It was only when they had turned to the left, and were standing by the Erechtheum, that she began chattering to Theodora and Zoe, and even then it was in an undertone:—

"My dear, you will make quite an archæologist of me! Twice up here in one week! Who will believe it? Now, once I am here, let me see all I can. Come and show me the cleft in the rock which Poseidon struck with his trident! Is n't it somewhere about here? And did n't a spring of oil, or something of the sort, gush up?"

Every one laughed. "Why not petroleum at once?" suggested her brother.

"My dear Polymnia!" — and her father could not keep his voice steady — "for a budding archæological student, your facts are a little mixed. It was a spring of salt water which welled up for Poseidon, and Athena in her turn produced the sacred olive tree."

Polymnia was duly shown the cleft in the rock, which she found rather insignificant. They turned up by the west to where the caryatids with the baskets on their heads, the "Maidens" of the Panathenaic procession, support the epistyle.

Among the five figures, whose pose of easy dignity makes them seem as though they hardly felt the burden they support, the bastard sixth, the crude plaster copy, looks as a daub of white paint might look on the picture of an old master.

"I think," said Theodora, "that I would rather have the empty space."

"Yes," said her uncle, "or if the support is necessary, a plain column. Not this pretense — this intruder!"

"I wonder why they do not rise up some dark night," said Zoe, "and cast her out from among them."

"Perhaps they will yet," suggested Theodora, "and in the morning the hollow brittle fragments will be found strewing the ground."

"No," said Costa; "the maids are condemned to immobility. But on dark nights they lament long and loud for their lost sister. It is moonlight to-night; that is why you cannot hear them."

"Is that what the legend says?"

"Legend!" protested Professor Manelli, with his whimsical little smile; "why, there are many inhabitants of the little houses under the Acropolis who have heard them with their own ears; at least there were in my young days. Perhaps they call it the wind now."

"Wait here a moment," Costa cried. "You shall have the story at first hand." And he disappeared in the direction of the Propylæa.

In a few moments he reappeared, and following him slowly came the old guardian, his white mustache drooping over his sunken mouth.

"Now, Kyr Yanni," said Costa, "I have told the professors here, Kyrios Philippides, and my father, Kyrios Manelli, and these ladies, that you will tell them the true tale of the maids of the Erechtheum, as you know it from the old days. Sit down on this stone and rest, and tell it to them! It will not be too much trouble for you, will it?"

"Trouble! What word is that? All I know is at your orders." And with a gesture of apology, he sat down on a marble shaft. His voice was thin and high-pitched, and his hands shook as he crossed them over his stick. He was silent for a few moments, and the elder Manelli asked him: —

"Have you heard the tale from your father?"

The old man shook his head. "No; it was my grandmother who told it to me many times, and she was a grown woman when the evil happened. You must know, sirs, professors, and ladies," he continued, "that when the English lord cut and hewed into the old marble, and took away one of the six maids, he wished to take away the others also, but he feared to do so."

"Why should he have been afraid?" interrupted Metro. "The Turks were masters of the land then; they would have sold him the Parthenon itself if he could have carried it away!"

"I do not know," said the old man; "my grandmother did not tell me, but he was afraid; so he left word with the Turks that they should bring him the other five after nightfall down to the ship. The infidels were afraid also, but they had been promised much gold, and on a dark

night they came up here to take the maids from the temple.

"It was quite dark, without one star, and they had lighted torches to do their work, but when they approached the temple the flame of the torches went out, and then in the dark they heard a great sound of weeping and wailing, and of voices crying the name of the stolen sister. The infidels fled in wild terror, and ran, and ran, and ran for hours, and not a man of them ever again attempted to lay a finger on the maids. And for many years, on moonless nights, those who lived below the Rock heard the maids lamenting for the sister who had been taken from them. My grandmother — she was a Wednesday-born child — heard them many times herself."

"And you?" inquired Zoe curiously; "have you never heard them?"

The old man shook his head slowly. "No; if I tell you I have heard them, I shall be telling you lies. But, they tell me, I sleep very soundly."

"Not even when you are on guard here?" persisted Zoe; "did you never hear anything?"

The old man got up from his seat; he looked dazed, and as though in some vague way the questions were troubling him. "No, Kyria, I have heard naught. We always lock up the gates and leave at sunset, and it is only on moonlight nights that one of us returns to open the gates for those who come."

When he had gone back to his post, the others stood about on the great open space between the Erechtheum and the Parthenon.

Polymnia sank down on a wooden bench. "Let us sit down a little and look at the view, and the moonlight over the columns and the mountains, from here. What is the good of climbing up more broken marbles and high steps. Once we have been inside one of the temples it is as though we had seen all. Come, Zoe!"

Zoe obeyed at once, sitting down a little heavily on one end of the bench. Costa, who had been watching her, took a coat of his father's which he had been carrying, and, folding it into a small square, put it behind her back.

"Why did you not say you were tired?" he asked rather abruptly.

Zoe looked up at him for a second. "Thank you! It does not matter at all. I can rest to-morrow."

Without speaking he started off for a second time at a quick pace in the direction of the Propylæa.

His father called out after him: "Where are you going, Costa?"

He answered without turning round: "To tell the carriages to drive up to the upper entrance."

"You will never make the old man understand; he was half asleep when he left us."

"I shall go myself."

"Very well; we will wait for you here."

But Theodora had not sat down. "I am going inside the Parthenon, my uncle; will you call me when you want to start, and I will come out on the other side."

"Go, my child, and I will call you."

She started, and very quietly, very naturally, Metro followed her without saying a word. She looked at him, smiling. "Ah, you agree with me that it would be impossible to go away on such a night without standing inside the Parthenon, even if it be only for a moment."

Metro helped her up the first high step where the columns are fallen.

"It is not the same for all," he answered gravely; "your uncle is old, the poor young girl is lame, and your cousin is fat and I suppose gets tired easily."

Theodora suppressed a laugh, as she imagined Polymnia's face if she could have heard him.

"But for us," he continued, "it would be, as you say, impossible."

Then, stopping a moment in the outer colonnade, he asked her suddenly: "Why are you troubled this evening?"

Theodora started. "I? Troubled? No, indeed. I am enjoying every moment."

"You are enjoying the beauty, that is different; but something is troubling you. When we were in the carriage coming up here, you were thinking of it. Your cousin spoke to you, and you did not hear her. When those children ran before the horses, and the coachman scolded them, you did not notice, and while the others laughed about the old lady, who thought that to climb up to the Acropolis was like climbing Mont Blanc, you did not laugh; you frowned and your eyes were fixed on nothing."

Theodora hesitated a moment, and then looked up frankly. "You are right, but I had forgotten it for the moment. I was thinking of my father. It is a good many days since I have had a letter from him."

"You fear he may be ill?"

"Oh, no! Not that. But I always want to know exactly where he is, and what he is doing, and even what he is thinking. I suppose I am foolish, and I know he hates letter-writing, but we have always lived together, and only we two, and —"

"You are not foolish! Why does not your father write to you every day so that nothing should trouble you?"

She stiffened slightly. "My father is a very busy man. Even now that he is not in active service, he is in constant touch with the men who count most in all matters of state in many countries, and in constant correspondence with his political friends here."

"That is necessary, I suppose," said Metro calmly; "but his daughter should come first."

"Few daughters, I believe, have shared their father's life and interests as much as I have. Shall we go inside?"

Passing through the second colonnade, to the inner part of the temple, they stopped short, arrested by the

silent, overpowering majesty of the eternal temple at this hour, serene, pure-lined, and stupendous. Speech seemed impossible, profane, as they stood there in the middle of the cella over the very spot where the statue of the goddess had been and for a long time they were silent in the midst of the perfect silence surrounding them. Not the imposed silence of a religious ceremony, not the silence of a great cathedral with the pulse of humanity beating through it; but the true silence

> "Of desolate walls,
> Of antique palaces where man hath been."

At last Theodora whispered: "Why do we feel so strongly that we ought not to be here?"

"Because," said Metro slowly, — and his eyes as he spoke were fixed on a white ray of moonlight as it divided the deep shadows of two columns one from the other, — "because this is the Maid's Temple, apart and austere; clean from men, and their desires and their passions; the one spot left to Athena where once all was hers; the one temple where she can forget the strange race of kings and rulers and Christian priests who have overrun her city. And if she lament, there must be none to listen but her own birds!" And he pointed to a distant column, where on the capital they could just discern the outline of a small gray owl.

At the same moment a call came from the Propylæa:—

"The-o-dora! The-o-do-o-o-ora!"

"They are ready," she said; "let us go!"

At the Porte Beulé they found only the two Manellis. One of the coachmen had not been able to stay so late, they explained, so Polymnia, with Zoe, had driven off in the remaining carriage, and would send back another from the Square; in the mean while they four would walk slowly on and meet it.

The father and son, arm in arm, went a little ahead, and Theodora and Metro followed.

"Do you remember," she asked, "the first time you ever came up to the Acropolis? I suppose not. Those who have always lived in Greece have been up here as children, and no clear first memory remains."

"But I never came to Athens until I had closed my fifteen years," answered Metro, "and I remember as though it were yesterday. Monsieur Arnoux brought me here on a Sunday morning."

"Did you understand anything of the grandeur? Did you care?"

"Yes," said Metro slowly; "I think I did. Perhaps I had expected more of a shining white temple, less of a ruin; but the lines — I had always loved beautiful lines; it is in our blood, I think — made me look and look, and long, as they say, to have four eyes to see with, instead of two. And all the beauty that I passed by, Monsieur Arnoux made me notice."

"You came alone to Athens?"

"Of course; who should bring me?"

"You came to study archæology, so young?"

"Oh, no! I had never even heard the word at that time."

"Then what made you leave your island? Did your parents — I mean your relations send you?"

"Send me! No one sent me. Though Kyra Sophoula made it possible for me to come."

"And did you live in a school when you first came to Athens?"

"In a school? I! How could that be? I see you do not understand."

"I should like to understand. Will you not tell me?"

They passed out through the lower entrance, at the foot of the Acropolis, to the broad road that skirts the ancient theaters. At this hour the road was entirely deserted, and stretched before them white and luminous

in the moonlight. Only the delicate leaves of the pepper trees cast the clear-cut shadow of their fine tracery on the ground at their feet.

Metro was silent so long that Theodora thought he had not heard her question.

"Yes," he said at last; "I will tell you about my life, and then you will understand everything. You have, perhaps, already heard part of my story. Because I have had the great good luck to get the appointment at the University, much younger than other men generally become professors, and because I had no family friends to help me, people say that I began as an errand boy, as a loustro who blacks boots in the street, or even as a beggar boy. But that is not true; though perhaps in some ways it might have been easier for me if I had known the town, and town ways, from the time I was a small child. But I was born in Poros. My father was a boatman with a boat of his own, and they tell me he was an honest man. When he died, my mother, who was an orphan and had no people of her own, found life very hard. She often left herself without sufficient food, that I might not go hungry. So when she fell ill of a bad illness, she died almost at once. I was only six years old, and my father's brother took me to his house. What else could he do? But he was not a good man, nor one who ever stayed long under his own roof, and when he drank too much, he became like a wild beast, and one evening in winter he turned me out into the rain. It was then that Kyra Sophoula took me."

"Was she your aunt or a relation?"

"She was only an old widow who had known my father and mother when they were children, and had been good to my mother when she was ill; so because of that she thought she must be good to me also, and feed me, and take care of me, and keep me warm. My uncle was glad to be rid of me, and soon afterwards he was killed in a

fight at the fair at Vithi. Kyra Sophoula had an orphan granddaughter to bring up, and she was very poor. She had a small lemon orchard on the mainland, but the sickness came to the lemons and the trees never gave much, and the old woman used to go over the hills picking herbs and simples, which she sold to the neighbors. Sometimes she would do a day's washing for one and a day's mending for another. When they could, they paid her; when they could not, she would say she did it for the good of her soul; and always, if there was sickness, or death, or a woman come to her time, they would send for Kyra Sophoula, and even in the night and the rain she would run. Once, when some one reproached her for sitting up all night with a woman who had often spoken ill of her and done her harm, I heard her say, 'Do you think, then, that because she has an evil tongue her pain is less than another's, or that she does not need help as much as you would?'"

"Oh!" cried Theodora, with a little catch in her voice, "what a beautiful thing to say!"

"She is a very good woman," continued Metro, "and a very brave one. Of course we fared poorly, but there was always enough bread and a drop of oil for the hanging lamp before the icons. When we got bigger, it was easier for her. Maroussa helped her grandmother in the house and I got odd jobs at the oil press or in the fields. But I always went to school for some time every day. She never took me away; though I know now that Kyr Sotiro, the coffee-house keeper, offered her good pay if she would let me go and sweep out the tavern and wash glasses and serve the men. But she said that while her strength held out, Anthi's lad — Anthi was my mother's name — should have as much book-learning as he could. Then, when I was fifteen, a man who kept boats offered to take me to work in them; and for many days I tried to make up my mind to do it, so as to earn money for the old woman, but somehow I could not, and I told her that

I wanted to study more, to become a schoolmaster; that I wanted to come here to Athens as other poor lads did, and serve part of the day in a house or a shop in return for food and shelter, and go to school for the rest.

"She was a poor, ignorant old woman who could not write her name, and many another in her place would have sworn at me. They would have said, 'Have I fed you so many years for nothing?' But she! — she only said, 'Very well; I will not have you wear out your heart at work for which you are not made. If you wish it, you shall go to the town.' As though it were to-day I remember the morning on her little terrace when she said it to me, as she was watering her pots."

"And you went?"

"I went, but not as I had expected to go. When the time came for me to start, Kyra Sophoula had got fifty drachmæ for me; she did not want me to arrive in town with empty pockets. And can you think what she had done to get them? She had sold her copper pans."

"Copper pans?" echoed Theodora wonderingly.

"Yes, real Constantinople ones, and some oven trays as well. You know those thick copper ones that shine the brighter the older they are?"

Theodora did not know at all. But she understood by the tone of Metro's voice the reality of the sacrifice.

"So," he continued, "when I came here to Athens, I found a poor woman who let me sleep on a mattress in a passage if I would sweep out the yard in the evening after school and fetch water for her; and the fifty drachmæ kept me in food for a long while until I found some work to do in the evenings. I was very lucky, and found two grocers' shops where the masters were ignorant men and afraid of being cheated; so every evening I counted up their books for them, and that made thirty drachmæ, and then I did some odd things at a place where they printed a newspaper, and that made ten drachmæ more, and then,

of course, with forty drachmæ a month, I had all I needed."

Theodora tightened one hand over the other as she walked. He had "all he needed" with forty drachmæ a month! "All he needed!"

"After that I met Monsieur Arnoux; he was the French master at the school to which I went."

There was a pause, and then Theodora said: "He was very good to you and helped you greatly, did he not?"

"He did not help me; he made me! And 'good' is not the word for which I was searching. He was that also, of course. Good! 'Bon comme du pain,' as he would say himself; but — I do not know if I can put what I mean into words. My life has changed in all things since he took it into his hands. I was not any more the child, the boy to whom a few people were good, and many were indifferent. I became some one who counted; I do not mean for the world, of course, but I counted for him, in his life, and I knew it. While we were here, he kept me with him; he taught me — not only French, but many things; many things. He cared for me when I had a bad fever; when I was better he fed me, while I could not work to feed myself. He sent letters to the old woman, that I was well and she must not be anxious. Not only did he listen to my troubles, but he told me his own, which is more. And when he was offered important work in his own country, his first thought was to take me with him, and if in my turn I was entrusted with serious work, it was because I was his pupil!"

"And the old — I mean Kyra Sophoula — how pleased and proud she must have been to see how wonderfully you got on."

Metro laughed a little. "She did not understand it at all the first years. Since I had been sent to Athens, and had studied to become a schoolmaster, she wondered why

I worked in museums and helped in excavations. Only now that we have explained to her, that a professor is a sort of higher schoolmaster, is she content."

There was a sound of wheels coming nearer, and Costa turned his head to call to them.

As they hurried their step, Metro stooped a little and said quickly: "There is a foreign post to-morrow; I feel sure that you will receive the letter you expect from your father."

Theodora looked up at the long, dark face which was bent over her. There was nothing in the words but a kindly desire to reassure her, inherent in the Greek character; still it pleased her somehow that this man, whom she had never seen until a week ago, whose very voice had still unfamiliar intonations to her ear, should concern himself with what troubled her.

"It is kind of you to remember; so many people cannot understand why I should worry about delayed letters. But, you see, no one can quite know what my father is to me!" And in her eyes, as she gazed unseeingly at the waiting carriage, Metro, with a little start, recognized the tenderness of the smile of his dream.

CHAPTER IX

He went to the Manellis' the next afternoon, and he went again on the following Monday evening to dinner. Three days afterwards he told Monsieur Arnoux, who met him on the stairs more carefully dressed than usual, that he was going to pay his duty visit.

Monsieur Arnoux, who had always hitherto been obliged to remind him, not once, but many times, of the few necessary visits to the wives of some of the professors, looked at him rather curiously. "You are becoming very careful of your social duties, my friend!"

Metro flushed a little, and asked whether it was too soon to go, after the invitation to dinner. "But no; not at all. You are correctness itself."

However, the ladies were out, Gerassimos told him when he reached the house. They had been out since early in the afternoon. He thought they had gone shopping. He was sure, he added consolingly, that they would be most sorry when they heard that "his nobility" had called.

Metro left his "salutations," smiled at the old man, and went down the street slowly, his shoulders slightly hunched, his hands swinging rather awkwardly as he walked. He had not calculated on such a very ordinary thing as that of the people he went to visit being out on a fine afternoon. He had talked of so many things to Theodora on the Sunday afternoon, and again on the evening he dined there; he had so much more to say and to hear; the house had already taken for him such a familiar, friendly aspect. He had imagined so exactly in what corner of the room Theodora would be sitting, and how she would smile as she greeted him. Now, when would he see — them all again? Perhaps never! He had been invited and

had been received with friendliness; he had paid his duty visit, — and they were out! So the exchange of civilities was over. An unaccountable depression came over him; there seemed no reason why they should be renewed.

Suddenly, instinctively, he lifted his head and looked down the street.

Polymnia and Theodora, accompanied by the two little girls, were coming toward him.

Hypatia, the younger one, who had already made great friends with Metro, started running as soon as she caught sight of him, and threw herself upon him. "We've been to the shops with mamma, and Auntie Theodora bought us some paints and paint-brushes, and we are going to paint the pictures she brought us from Paris."

Metro stooped down to disentangle a long strand of fair hair which had twisted itself round a button of his coat. "And will you show me the pictures when you have painted them?"

The child reminded him slightly of Maroussa, the girl with whom he had been brought up; only that Maroussa had been a stronger, handsomer little creature and much more sunburnt.

"Mamma! Mamma!" — and Polymnia, coming up, was attacked before she had time to give her hand to Metro: "He says that we must show him our pictures when they are painted. May we go up and begin them now? May we? Please say yes! Please! Please!"

"Hush, child! Wait a minute! And how many times must I tell you that well-brought-up children do not call people 'he'! Kyrie Philippides, this is very lucky! A moment later and we should have missed you. We had come to leave the children at home and go on an errand for my father; but now you must come in and have tea, and the parcel can be left for another day; it is nothing important."

"But no, if you please," answered Metro, very em-

barrassed; "I would not for anything prevent you from doing what the professor requires."

"I assure you it does not matter. It is only some books to leave at an old schoolfellow's of father's; and, anyway, it would have been a voyage of discovery, for he lives —" and she looked at a flat parcel which she was holding; "in the Street of Nicodemus, and I have not the slightest idea where that may be. But father's old friends always do live in impossible places."

"I will come —" began Metro; and then, mindful of Monsieur Arnoux's constant lessons, he changed his phrase: "If you will permit it, I will come with you. I know the street quite well; it is in the old Plaka."

By this time they had reached the house and Theodora rang the bell, and, giving her parcels to Gerassimos, she turned to Metro with a smile: —

"We accept with gratitude, and afterwards, if you are free for a little longer, we will return for tea, and Despina and Hypatia shall show us what they have painted."

And so the three started off, going first down the Avenue of the University, then quickly past the Dardanelles, and more leisurely along the footway between the Square of the Palace and the sunken garden of the Constitution. It was early November, and though warm and sunny the sky had already the deeper blue winter tint, and little white clouds were massed behind the tall cypresses.

There were but one or two people in the garden below, and a woman carrying a child was toiling up the long flight of steps flanked by the two monumental vases. She reached the top, panting in short gasps, and let herself fall on one of the benches. She was a small, thin woman, with a pale, big-headed child wrapped up in two shawls.

Metro looked at her and stopped short. "It is you, Marika? Where are you taking the child?"

The woman struggled to her feet, and stood before him holding on to the back of the bench.

"Sit down!" he said abruptly; "the ladies will excuse you."

She sank down again and looked up at him with a timid smile. "My mistress is out for the day, and she said I might be free after my work was done, so I went to the woman that keeps him, and took the child out into the sun for a bit. He never gets out, the poor one!"

"Where is Yoryi now?"

"Always at the same place."

"Have they raised his pay?"

"Ah, no, Kyrie Metro! And when he asked for a little more, they told him there were plenty ready to take the work for less. And so there are," she added with a deep sigh.

"What work does your husband do?" inquired Polymnia kindly.

The woman twisted the fringe of the child's shawl round her fingers, and looked at Metro.

"She is not married," he said quickly, in French; then, turning to the woman: "Tell Yoryi to come to me at noon to-morrow; there is a place at the Museum, at seventy-five drachmæ a month, which I think I can get for him."

The woman stood up, shifting the child to the other arm. "Oh, Kyrie Metro, can you truly? It will seem like lies to Yoryi! If he earns as much as that, next year he will be able to marry me. You will forgive me for speaking of such things before the ladies, but on his father's soul he promised that he would."

"Why next year? Why not at once?"

"Because he is bound to the rooms he has for another year. Good rooms they are, too, at twenty drachmæ a month, but too good for us; we could not pay that. Next year we will get one cheap room."

"Well," said Metro, "send him to me! We will talk about it. Here — " and he signed to a passing victoria.

"Get into this, and tell the driver the address. You have walked enough."

While he was paying the man, Theodora put her hand over the door, and stroked the child's cheek. "He has pretty eyes. What do you call him?"

"Stamati, Kyria; after my father."

"See, the shawl is too tight, he cannot move his little hands. You must take this," slipping a folded note into her hand, "and get him a warm coat. And you need not wait — on account of the rooms! Tell your — man that I will pay the rent."

"Kyria! Kyria!"—the woman looked frightened. "It is not possible! I do not know what to say!"

"Do not trouble yourself. I hope this will make things easier for you."

Metro made a sign to the coachman to drive on, and poor Marika's "God make your years many!" came to them from a distance.

Metro guided them past the Russian church and into the quaint old byways of the Plaka, until they came to the Street of Nicodemus and delivered the professor's parcel. They returned by another way through narrow, quiet, provincial-looking streets, where one has the impression of being far from Athens.

The days passed rapidly. There were other walks, and it became an understood thing that Metro should return to the house with them afterwards, and Gerassimos brought the cup of coffee quite naturally with the teacups without being told. Once Metro had been asked to lunch at the Laras', to see the photographs of the new types of ships that Nasso had promised to show him, and Polymnia and Theodora happened to come for a visit just when he was wondering at what time it was correct to leave, after a midday meal. So it ended by their all staying to tea, and Nasso fulfilled his promise

to Theodora by singing to them all the old Greek songs.

Then, as Miss Burney also had dropped in, he sang a few little Irish things for her, and wound up with his favorite "Ideale" for everybody. The first stars had appeared when they left at last.

Of course there were days when Metro kept away, and tried to work hard and made many resolutions; but after three of these solitary days, or even two, after a hard morning's work or a lesson given at the University, the resolutions failed. When evening came, when the lights were lighted, he would push aside his books, close his room, and somehow, almost unconsciously, his steps would lead him toward the steep street at the foot of Mount Lycabettus, and he would find himself before the little brass plate where the "A. Manelli" was almost effaced by much polishing. There was always an excuse, of course; a new appointment to fix; a new photograph or cast of a new or little known coin to bring; a book to lend, or borrow, or return. Old Gerassimos would smile and greet him as an old friend. The ladies were in, — yes, — they were generally at home in the "little evening."

Ah, those "little evenings"! — when after sunset the tang of coming winter was in the air, when they sat in the big, ugly, cozy room, with only one light turned on, and the olive logs sputtering and crackling, and the shadows stretching up to the ceiling when any one moved about.

Generally Polymnia was there when Metro came, but she never stayed all the time. She was of those who come and go, who never sit in one place for long. She would be called away to see the joiner who had come about the shelves in her room, then come back and talk for a little while, then rush off to remind Gerassimos about the hot toast for tea, and lastly was most busy

with a dressmaker in the house, seeing about the children's winter things.

But Theodora would sit by the fire in the old straight-backed, embroidered chair, and Metro would tell her what the day had brought, of its small trials, of its successes. And Theodora would listen with the listening which understands before the sentence is finished; and smile sometimes, and sit very still, with her hands on each arm of the big chair; for she never made useless movements. One day she read out to him part of a letter from her father, in which he wrote that he had seen with pleasure how interesting had been his daughter's first visit to the Acropolis after so long an absence, and that he could well imagine how her interest and pleasure must have been enhanced by the presence and speech of young Professor Philippides, many of whose most able articles he had read in the "Revue Numismatique Française."

Monsieur Arnoux, who knew Metro far better than he knew himself, — for the Poros mind is not analytical, — understood that his "son," as he sometimes called him, was living in a dream of enchantment, and knowing that he would dream on and on, and never once stop to look at the fairylike material of which he had woven his dream in the ordinary light of everyday possibilities, he dreaded the awakening.

However it was very sudden.

Costa Manelli had arranged a whole-day excursion to Tatoi. It was not the best season for the woods, but as it was principally for Theodora, there was no choice. Andriotti was asked, Dandolo and his sister, Amédée de Sabry, of the French Legation, and "Jim" Larcher, of the English one, with his American wife, who were special friends of Costa's. Two days before the one fixed upon, Metro found that, on account of the sudden illness of one of the University professors and the consequent

alteration of some of the classes, it would be impossible for him to be free on that day; so he set off for the Manellis' house toward the "little evening" in order to tell them so.

Gerassimos, who would have thought it the height of incivility not to explain the why and the wherefore of the absence of every member of the family, explained to him that Kyria Valliadi had taken the children to the cinematograph, and that Kyrios Costa was out with his father, because, he added, "he finds that the old master sits too much over his books," but that Kyria Theodora was in the sala.

Metro found her writing. She rose at once and came forward to meet him, and they both stood in the middle of the room while he explained the obstacle which would prevent his coming with them to Tatoi.

She did not express her regret in any way, only thought for an instant. Then she asked: "At what time is this class you have to take? Is it in the morning?"

"No; if it were in the morning, I should come up to Kiphissia by an afternoon train, and walk from there to Tatoi, to find you."

"Yes, that was my idea: but since it cannot be —"

She did not finish her sentence, but returned to the writing table and began to put away her papers.

"I am all the more sorry," she added, fitting some unwritten sheets of paper into a pocket of her blotter, "because it is getting too late for many more excursions, and, of course, I shall be going away soon."

"You — will — be — going — away?"

His words sounded like the separate strokes of a hammer, and Theodora looked up in surprise.

"Why, yes," she answered; "I have just been writing to my father that the Zafirides, with whom I traveled here, are passing through on their way back to Marseilles next week, but that I have let them know I shall not travel with them, as that would be too soon, and I have asked

him to write to me if he hears of any other friends who may be returning to Paris or London within the next month, and who would take me with them. I have told Costa, also, to inquire here."

She left her blotter on the table and crossed the room to the fireplace, where she dropped a crumpled envelope on to the burning logs. Then, putting one foot on the fender, she leaned her arm on the mantel shelf and gazed down into the fire.

"If it were not for the joy of seeing my father again, I should feel quite miserable about going; it has been so perfect, this return to my own country; even more than I expected; and the realization of any dream is so rarely that. Do you not think so?"

But Metro did not answer her question — had not even heard it. He stood there silent, a few paces from the fireplace, his one hand held tightly in the other, looking at her fixedly.

"How *can* you go?" — the words burst from him like a torrent. "How can you go since I love you?" Then, in a moment: "It is true! I did not know it, but I love you!"

Theodora said nothing, only her arm fell to her side and she looked at him with a growing wonder in her eyes.

Suddenly he stretched out his arms before him, but without coming any closer to her; neither did she retreat at all.

Then his words came with a violent rush, and so quickly that they made his utterance thick.

"I tell you that I did not know it. I knew that my eyes were always upon you, that I had you in my mind all my waking hours, and saw you every night in my sleep, I knew that. But fool that I was, I did not understand! I thought it was only because you are beautiful and sweet-spoken; but that you had become the light of my eyes, and the golden love of my life, *that* I did not know. Only

now, when you talked of going, did you put a knife in my heart and my brain reeled, and I spoke of love to you, a maiden, as I should not have done. I never came here to do such a thing! On my father's soul, I swear it! But I cannot take back what I have said. I love you! Whoever you are, and though it be madness, yet I love you, as I did not know that a man could love."

He stumbled forward half-blindly, and letting himself fall on the arm of the big chair beside her, he took up a fold of her dress and kissed it.

For a moment she remained awed, silent, wonder-struck. Then, as her eyes looked down at him, something seemed to grow familiar in the bowed head, in the strip of smooth, dark skin under the short hair; there was something awkwardly boyish and suddenly dear to her in his gesture, which sent a curious little thrill through her; a thrill, which even in that moment gave her a vague impression of a zigzag of lightning through a dark sky. So very gently, very naturally, almost instinctively, she bent down, and letting her arms rest on his shoulders, she kissed his forehead where it leaned against her.

But Metro did not seize her in his arms; on the contrary, he let fall the fold he was holding and sprang back a few steps, with flaming face, putting his hand up to his head.

"I do not know what came over me! It was madness! I had no right — no right — no right."

While he was repeating the words, and Theodora, who had turned very pale, stood silent, her eyes fixed upon him, the door was opened, and her uncle appeared on the threshold.

He stood for a moment, holding the handle in his hand, and looking curiously from one to the other. "Is anything the matter?" he asked.

Metro took a step forward, but suddenly, without any warning, he turned away, and leaning his arm on the window frame, pressed his face against it, gulping down

great tearless sobs. Twice he tried to speak and twice he failed.

"Shall I tell you, my uncle?"

"No!" Metro cried out, turning round quickly. "No!" — and his voice rang out through the room. "It is not for a woman to speak; the thing that has come to me I will cry it out to all! Am I an infant that I should not speak? Listen to me, because I must tell you that I have dishonored myself. I have abused the confidence which you placed in me. I love your niece; and now, when I understood the truth, instead of sending a friend to speak to you, instead, even, of coming to you myself, I dared in your house, where you have received me as a friend, to speak words of love to her — a maiden — without your permission. Now, do with me as you will! If you drive me out of your house, I can only say, 'The man was in his right!'"

The old professor hesitated for a moment, and looked beyond Metro to Theodora. She had laid her crossed arms upon the mantel shelf and put her head down upon them. Then he looked back at Metro and held out his hand to him.

"Kyrie Philippides," he said kindly, if a little formally, "I do not consider that you have abused the confidence which I placed in you. A moment of forgetfulness, of exaltation, is not dishonor; it is of your age. I do not 'drive you away from my house'; it is the last thing I wish to do," and he smiled with the little uplifting of his gray mustache; "but I think it would be wiser if you were to leave us just now. You understand that this is a serious matter, and that I wish to talk with my niece. I thank you for your sincerity, and I hope that we shall meet soon."

He pressed the hand he was holding, and stood where he was until Metro had left the room and until he heard the house door close behind him. Then he went up to Theodora and put his arm gently round her shoulders.

CHAPTER X

When Monsieur Arnoux came into his living-room, at about seven the next morning, he was considerably astonished to find Metro there before him. As a rule, when it was necessary for Metro to rise earlier than usual, it was on Monsieur Arnoux that the task of waking him devolved; nor did he always find it an easy one.

"You are early, my friend."

"Is it early? I thought that you were late. I have been up a long time."

"You are well, are you not?"

There was no answer, and Monsieur Arnoux went up to him and laid his hand on his. "You are not ill? Not feverish at all?" But as he turned Metro round and saw his face, he stretched out his hands, and they trembled as he spoke. "What has happened to you? What does this mean, Metro, — my son?"

"It means —" and Metro caught both his hands and held them tightly. "It means everything, master! It means that a great wonder has happened. A wonder which I had never imagined, not even in my dreams! A thing that can take a man's life and change it from one day to another. It means that she — she will be my wife!"

Then the little old man threw his arms around Metro, and trembled and wept a little on his shoulder. Tears of joy, for the joy of his "lad" certainly, and if a few tears of sadness and renouncement fell with them — who can blame him?

When he had quieted a little, and sat down beside Metro on the narrow red sofa, he still kept Metro's hand in his, and patted it every now and then. "What can I

say to you, my friend? All that there is desirable in the world is yours to-day! Is it not so? But tell me why this secrecy from your old master? Why not have whispered a word to me before all was finished? I might have spoken for you. I suppose you charged Andriotti with your demand. Well, of course, he is of your own country; it is probably more correct so. Has her father written to her uncle only, or to you also?"

Metro looked down at the floor, as he answered. "Her father knows nothing yet; nor Andriotti. Do you imagine I would allow any one but you to speak for me? No, master, it was a moment of madness; she said she was going away, and I — I told her she could not go, because I loved her; and if her uncle knows, it is only because he came into the room when — when —"

Monsieur Arnoux started to his feet. "You told her you loved her! But miserable child that you are! Did you think you were back in Poros talking to some Maroussa, or Chryssi, or Viola, at the fountain? And even there you would probably have sent Kyra Sophoula to the girl's parents to make your demand for you! You told her she could not go, because you loved her! You said that to Theodora Douka, the daughter of the man who has represented your king at I know not how many courts of Europe, and who himself descends from a long line of emperors! Her father knows nothing yet, and you announce to me that she will be your wife, with the same assurance as if I should say, 'I shall drink this cup of milk.' No! You make me laugh!"

And the little old man began pacing nervously up and down the room with his hands crossed behind his back.

Metro followed him. "But, master, no! But, master, listen! She herself — I think — and she has always said her father denies her nothing; and her uncle was so good. He said it was a serious matter, of course; but he hoped we should meet soon."

"Her uncle! Her uncle!" grumbled Monsieur Arnoux. "Her uncle is a sensible man, but unfortunately the question is not for him to decide. Do I know what princes and dukes this ex-minister dreams of for his daughter?"

"But her uncle will write to him; and I thought, perhaps, master, that you would go to-day and explain —"

"Oh, of course!" snorted Monsieur Arnoux; "I must go to-day! That is all that is necessary! You fall into the hole and then you are all impatience for Papa Arnoux to run and pull you out! Here! Give me my overcoat!"

Metro laughed a little, and pointed to the clock. "Who is impatient now? It is not eight o'clock; and your coffee is cold. Wait a little! Sit down, and I will warm it for you."

But when, two hours later, Monsieur Arnoux was waiting in the small study of the Manellis' house, he would fain have put off the moment. Nothing, however, of this nervousness showed as he came forward to meet the professor. On the contrary, his manner was that golden mean between etiquette and urbanity which denotes great occasions.

Monsieur Arnoux was a scholar, an archæologist, a philosopher, a poet, even, in his "lost moments," but — and the combination is rather rare — he was also a man of the world. Perhaps this was owing to the early influence of a delightful little mother, who, though she had followed her husband with enthusiasm when he had been appointed professor of Greek to the College of Montpellier, had never lost touch with the Faubourg Saint-Germain from which she originally came.

"Monsieur le professeur," he began, "allow me to thank you for receiving me at this early hour. It was necessary that I should not delay in laying before you the very deep-felt and very sincere excuses of my pupil and friend,

Monsieur Philippides, for the error into which a moment of exaltation led him yesterday."

"I beg, Monsieur Arnoux, that you will not mention it again; Monsieur Philippides was most frank himself about it. Sit down, my dear sir, sit down!"

"One moment, with your permission. In the absence of your brother-in-law, Monsieur Douka, I have the honor to lay before you the demand of Monsieur Philippides for the hand of your niece in marriage."

"My first answer is this, that were Mademoiselle Douka my daughter instead of my niece, your demand would be already granted. I have a very great esteem for your young friend, — a very real affection; but — she is not my daughter. She is the daughter of a man to whom I fear the obstacle of birth is an insuperable one, and I will not hide from you, Monsieur Arnoux, that I am very troubled, indeed, that this feeling should have arisen between the two young people. I do not talk of my responsibility in the matter; that," he added with a little uplifting of the gray mustache, "is a weight which I can carry; besides, my niece has always been permitted the greatest latitude in her choice of friends and acquaintances. But I have understood since yesterday that my niece — is — very sincerely attached to Monsieur Philippides, and I foresee great difficulties before her; *great* difficulties."

"What a pity Monsieur Douka did not come here with his daughter! If he could have known Metro personally—"

"He would have been enchanted with him, I am positive, knowing him as I do; but — I do not think that would have made the slightest difference to his point of view in this case. The Doukas, according to him, may know all men, — nay, are bound by their own birth to be courteous and considerate to every one; but — they can only mate with their equals."

"But are there not exceptions, monsieur, when circumstances and character lift a man out of the accident of his birth and make him equal to the highest? Ah, if only I had the honor of your brother-in-law's acquaintance! It seems to me that I could convince him."

"Certainly no one could attempt it with greater chance of success. To-day, I shall write to my brother-in-law. My niece will also write to her father, and I have advised her to ask for a telegraphic answer."

"That is very good of you, and I know how Metro will appreciate the lessening of the days of waiting."

"You will understand, Monsieur Arnoux, and you will, I hope, explain to Monsieur Philippides, — adding at the same time my own very warm wishes for his success, — that at best I scarcely dare to hope for more than a conditional answer. My brother-in-law, if he takes his daughter's wishes into serious consideration in this case, will probably wish to make his own inquiries; he has many friends in Athens in all circles."

"The more inquiries he makes, the more points in our favor."

"There is one thing more, which you mentioned just now; something about the days of waiting. We must calculate seven, or eight, and they will, I am afraid, be very awkward for — for all of us."

Monsieur Arnoux did not hesitate. "It is a long time since Metro has visited his island; and I am sure it will not be difficult for him to arrange with a colleague about missing one or two classes. He shall leave by this afternoon's steamer, and you, monsieur, shall let me know when to recall him."

"I am most grateful to you."

He accompanied Monsieur Arnoux to the hall door, and his last words to him were: "Tell Monsieur Philippides that I shall not delay sending the answer to you, even by an hour."

Then he went back to his study, rang for Gerassimos, gave strict orders that he was on no account to be disturbed, and began his letter to his brother-in-law. By noon his basket was full of closely written sheets torn into small pieces; his completed letter consisted of only four small pages.

He was reading it over with a frown, when Costa opened the door. "Gerassimos said you were busy, father; shall I tell Polymnia to delay luncheon?"

"No, I have finished." He stood up, and, unlocking a drawer, pulled out a box of envelopes.

"You have written?"

"Yes; here is the letter; you may read it. Perhaps it will seem stiff to you, but it was very difficult to write. I began by writing differently at first; I spoke more of Theodora, of how happy her mother would have been to see her look as she did yesterday when she spoke to me of this young man; I spoke a good deal of Philippides himself, and how he strikes us all — and then I tore it all up! It is no good; I can see before me so clearly the ironical little smile with which he would read all I could write beyond the bare facts of the case."

Costa ran over the letter with his eyes before answering. "No," he said slowly, as he turned over the last leaf, "I do not think you could write anything else; and though one had 'the tongue of angels' it would have precisely the same effect."

"You think," asked his father a trifle wistfully, "that it is quite impossible that he should —"

"Impossible! My dear father! He will have serious doubts as to our sanity."

Professor Manelli heaved a deep sigh. "Poor Theodora! I like the boy, Costa! I like him! He has so much in him, and it seems such a real pity that she should have to give him up."

"Pity! It is a wicked waste! Here is a man of rare

intelligence, unimpeachable character, young, strong, healthy, combining the untired, undegenerate blood of the peasant, with the mind of a scholar and the heart of a perfect gentleman, and my uncle will see in him only 'the base-born serf' insolently aspiring to the hand of his daughter! Ah! A man has no right to be born out of his century!"

He struck his hand so violently against the table that a few drops of ink spurted out of the inkpot and all the pens in the tray rattled. He jumped up, and with a corner of the blotting-paper gathered up the drops from the cloth.

"Excuse me, father. This uncle of mine gets on my nerves. I am afraid I am not at all grateful for our connection with the noble family of Douka. If Theodora is what she is, it is because she is her mother's daughter." And as he spoke he looked at the solemn little girl with the short black curls of the big portrait over his head.

"But, after all, Costa, in this case you are condemning him prematurely."

His son laughed. "If there is no mention of a mad asylum for us, in his answer, I will —"

But he had no time to say what he would do before Theodora came into the room, holding a closed letter in her hand. "My uncle, you will enclose it in yours?"

"Yes, my child; and I will send the whole, registered, this afternoon. You have remembered to ask your father to telegraph?"

"Oh, yes."

"You cannot expect an answer before six or seven days at the earliest."

"Yes, I know that."

Then, as she put the letter down before her uncle, he stretched across the desk, and took hold of both her hands. "Little niece! You are prepared for a great deal of opposition, — at first, — even if you succeed at last?"

Theodora looked down into his eyes, with a tender, happy little smile. "No, my uncle."

"But —"

"Oh, I know what you mean, of course, and if it were a question of some other man of the same birth, my father would find it impossible — and so should I myself; but I have told him —"

"What have you told him?"

"That this is a man entirely apart. A man whose name not only I, but any woman, however well-born, would be proud to bear."

"But consider how natural it is, my child, that your father should think you blinded; there are so few whom he could deem worthy —"

"I have told him that the question is whether *I* can be worthy of being the companion of two such men, in one life; of himself, first, and now of — of this one. No! I am not anxious! The very fact that I have thought of a man and have wished to become his wife will make my father understand that he is all he himself could have chosen for me."

Silently Professor Manelli looked up at the straight, tall figure of his niece, at the resolute expression, at the small head slightly thrown back, and silently he told himself that this was a new Theodora. He had thought her the counterpart of her mother as he remembered her; gentle, even a little diffident; of strong affections, but great reserve; whereas this was a superbly confident woman, undeniably the daughter of an imperious race.

He came round to the other side of the desk, and kissed her lightly on the cheek. "God grant you may be right, my child!"

The registered letter had been sent on Thursday evening and had left Athens on Friday. The following Thursday was the first really chilly day of the season, and

toward evening it had begun to rain violently. Polymnia had driven off after dinner to an intimate poker party, to which she had been entreated to come early; Theodora had gone upstairs to see the children in bed, and her uncle and Costa were sitting over their coffee in the dining-room when Gerassimos came in with a telegram.

Costa leaned across the table. "Is it — ?"

"No," said the professor, taking it up from the tray; "it is for me; besides, it could not be that already."

He tore open the envelope as he spoke, and unfolded the paper.

His face changed.

"And yet — it is! See, Costa! She was right, after all!"

Costa sprang to his feet and seized hold of the telegram. It was addressed to his father, and ran as follows: —

To Aristidi Manelli,

Professor of the University, Athens.

I have fullest confidence in my daughter's judgment. Let her act as she thinks best. I accept in advance any decision of hers. M. Douka.

Costa read it through twice, the last time, aloud; then, "The ancients were right," he said. 'One grows old ever learning.' I could never have believed it! His confidence in her choice is such that he puts aside every prejudice of class and family, and I know how strong they are in him. Well! I take off my hat to my uncle for the first time."

"Where is Theodora?" said his father, rising; "let us call her."

"Of course," added Costa, as they left the dining room; "of course, the wording of the telegram remains most characteristic of him; no word about her happiness, no wishes, no blessing, no message to his future son-in-law; such family feelings are not for the vulgar eyes of the telegraph clerks."

"Come, now, Costa! Come, now!" said his father, laughing; "we have the essential."

"Of course, of course; only Philippides is of the people, you know, and I imagine he will miss the typical blessing. Theodora!" he called, looking up, as he heard her footsteps descending. "Come down! Come down quickly! I want to grovel at your feet."

Theodora appeared round the corner of the staircase, and looked inquiringly from one to the other.

Her uncle went up a few steps to meet her and put the telegram into her hands.

"My child, here is your father's answer. You were perfectly right, and I was perfectly mistaken."

Theodora stood still, one step above her uncle, and read it through quietly; then she gave a little gasp and threw both arms round her uncle's neck, while the paper fluttered down over the balustrade to the hall below.

"There, child! There!" and he patted her shoulder and brought her down slowly with him into the hall. "Don't cry! You must not cry! You have been so brave all these days, and now —"

"I — I — am so happy, my uncle."

"That, of course, you must cry, I quite understand," said Costa; "only dry your eyes for a moment and look at me! I stand in humble abasement before your superior wisdom."

But Theodora did not seem to be listening. "What time is it, uncle?" she asked; "I wonder if Monsieur Arnoux —"

Costa rushed toward the hat-stand, and pulled down his overcoat. "I accept the penance!" he cried; "it pours with rain; the north wind howls; but I — I run — I fly to Monsieur Arnoux!"

"No, Costa, no!" protested Theodora.

"Send Gerassimos!" called the professor after him.

But Costa was already at the hall door. "No one will fly

as I shall. While you speak I am already halfway there. The telegram shall leave for Poros this evening!"

And they heard his footsteps running down the wet pavement outside.

They went back into the sitting-room to wait for him. There was a roaring fire of pine logs and olive roots, and they sat down one on each side of it; Theodora, with her hands folded loosely on her knees and her head against the straight back of the big chair; Professor Manelli leaning forward a little, with the firelight making a halo round his fine white hair.

They were rather silent.

Once the professor said: "Our letter must have just caught the best post, and your father must have sent off the telegram the moment he received it."

And Theodora answered: "Yes; I had calculated to-morrow as the earliest possible day."

When they heard the latchkey in the lock, the professor got up hastily. "Wait here! I will go and see what Costa has done."

But in the hall he found three men, — his son, Monsieur Arnoux, and in the background, out of the circle of the light, surely — surely it was —

Costa laughed. "There was no telegram needed, my father."

Monsieur Arnoux, with shining eyes and trembling lips, seized both his hands. "Monsieur le professeur, believe me, I did all that was possible, but this boy would not go to Poros; he said the return would be too long; so he has sat all these days by the window of my room, and waited. It was by force that I dragged him out a little after dark."

"I am glad," said the professor; "I am very glad he did not go. Yes, the return would have been long." And he advanced toward Metro, but the latter had his back turned and was occupied in hanging up his coat. The part

of his face that could be seen was rather flushed, and he seemed to require a long time to get his coat on to the hook.

Professor Manelli, with his hand still outstretched, stood watching him, with a whimsical little smile, when Costa came to the rescue.

"My father," he said, "Monsieur Arnoux, you, and I are going to sit in the dining-room and drink healths; I know where to find the champagne, and if Gerassimos does not find us singing little songs at dawn, I shall be astonished! You — Metro! Come with me!"

Metro turned suddenly round, grasped the professor's hand with a force that made the latter wince, and with lowered head and long strides followed Costa along the passage.

Monsieur Arnoux looked after him. "Ah! the queer lad!" he said with a little break in his voice; "there is joy in his heart to-night enough to make a god pale with envy, and yet were he going to be shot, he would walk just in that way!"

And Costa, stopping outside the sitting-room, put his hand on Metro's shoulder, and said, in the words of the people, but with rather a husky voice: "God make your years many, both of you!"

And then he pushed him inside the room and closed the door after him.

CHAPTER XI

It was the next morning after they had finished their coffee that Monsieur Arnoux pushed back his cup and asked Metro suddenly: "Did they show you the telegram last night?"

"Yes, certainly."

"And what did you find in it?"

Metro looked curiously at the old man. "That her father has the fullest confidence in her judgment. She — she told me — he always says that what she does is perfectly done."

"That is very well," said the old Frenchman a little impatiently; "but for me, confidence alone is a little dry. A father telegraphs to his only daughter to give his consent to her marriage; it is a great occasion, is it not? Must there not be one word of tenderness? of good wishes, at least? of welcome for the man to whom he entrusts her?"

Metro balanced a spoon carefully on his finger. "All that is understood; besides, perhaps great people are not so outspoken as the others."

"My mother," said Monsieur Arnoux, "was a de la Rochejacquelin; I would not mention it, were it not to say that I never knew a tenderer and more sweet-spoken creature!"

"It is different with mothers," said Metro slowly.

"No, my friend; what will you? I cannot hide my feelings; I did not like that telegram. He 'accepts her decision in advance.' 'Accepts' is cold; 'accepts' means submits with a bad grace; it means, 'My daughter is of a certain age; she has decided; it is not the Middle Ages

when I can shut her up in a tower; therefore, I accept. In other words I wash my hands of her and of her low-born husband!'"

Metro got up suddenly and put his hands on the little old man's shoulders, towering above him. "Master, why do you want to spoil my joy?"

Monsieur Arnoux stopped short, and his face worked as he looked up into the half-closed brown eyes. "Because —" he began; "because —" And suddenly he stretched out his hands. "Oh, because I am a heartless brute and an old imbecile! There! That is why! You see, my son, I stayed awake most of the night saying to myself, 'Louis, you have lost him! You have lost him, Louis!' and I get up with a humor that is fit to massacre whatever comes in my way, and I magnify all trifles; and this is the result!"

But Metro only said with a little smile: "Why do you stay awake saying impossible things to yourself?"

And that same afternoon, when the Manellis' sitting-room was full to overflowing with all who had come to bring their good wishes and congratulations, Monsieur Arnoux managed to get Theodora to himself for a few moments and tried to explain to her that she was a hundred thousand times luckier than she could possibly imagine herself to be.

"You must take it, mademoiselle," he added, "as though you were listening to a father — to a particularly fortunate father — talking of his son. And, believe me, this is not simply a manner of speaking, it is the absolute truth. I want you to understand it. I lost my parents young; I have been a solitary man all my life; it so happened that the joys of family did not come my way; but I have had Metro — and I have envied no father!"

"I understand," said Theodora, looking up into his eyes; "I understand with all my heart."

In another part of the room, Zoe Lara was shaking hands with Metro, and smiling at him. "And so—I guessed!"

He smiled also as he looked down at her. "Yes; you guessed."

That was all they said, but both found the words contained much present sympathy and a promise of future friendship.

As for Nasso, he came in uniform, looking more like a modern Hermes than ever. He shook Metro by both hands; he clapped him on the back with a hearty "Health to you, Metro!" and insisted on wishing both of them all the immemorial, impossible wishes of the people: "May you live a thousand years!" and "May your eyes never see sorrow!" On such occasions, he said, there was nothing like the old wishes, absurd or not.

Aunt Virginia, in a purple silk dress and a beaded black bonnet with a nodding purple plume, sailed in, smiling and benignant. She held Theodora's hand in one of her small, fat, cushiony ones, and patted it with the short, tapering fingers of the other, while she assured her in a gentle voice "how delighted, my dear child, really delighted, we are to welcome you as an Athenian." But here she shook her head dolefully. "Though, of course, you must be prepared to miss the pleasures and advantages of bigger capitals sadly."

Most people stayed very late, and Gerassimos had to make fresh tea three times, and a great many sandwiches were eaten and a great many sweets, Nasso, according to Zoe, having emptied one of the silver dishes of marrons glacés entirely alone, though he protested it was a calumny, as he had given at least two to the children, if not three.

The Delamanas, Roxane and her husband, came to dinner, and of course Metro stayed also. After dinner, on pretext of showing him some early photographs of

Theodora, Professor Manelli called them both into his little study, and then went back to the others in the sitting-room and left them together.

Metro sat holding in his hand a little old *carte-de-visite* photograph of a child in a velvet dress, and with short black hair. "It was you, really?"

"So really that I remember the dress; it was green velvet, with a lace collar; and it had a pocket in it — my first pocket! I remember that best of all."

She took the photograph from Metro's hands, and looked at it more closely. "I had forgotten the existence of this particular photograph, and it brings back so many things. It reminds me of sitting on a carpet with big red roses, and looking at the pictures of the 'Illustrated London News' and some one, in a mauve silk dress which rustled when she moved, sitting at a piano playing parts from 'Traviata.'"

"Was it — "

"My mother; yes."

"But you cannot recall her face, you told me?"

"No. Is it not strange? I only remember the mauve silk dress and the airs from 'Traviata.'"

Then she went on to tell him many little things, of which she had not yet spoken; of her journeys from place to place; of a rough sea passage when her father held her on his knees the whole time because she was frightened; of once when he cut short one of his rare holidays to take her to Orange to see a play of Sophocles at the old Greek Theater there, because she happened to be studying the old dramatists at the time. She touched lightly on their life, here and there, of this and that celebrity whom she had happened to meet; of Rostand, whom she had seen at his sister's house in Marseilles; of Sarah Bernhardt, who had picked her up when she fell down at a childrens' party in Paris, and who had asked her if she had hurt herself, and had called her "Une petite statue grecque."

But Metro could not help noticing that girl friends, young women, young men, intimate families, people in general seemed to have occupied very little place in her life; it was in everything, and before everything, her father, always her father.

At last she put together the photographs she was holding, and turned to him. "When you come to-morrow, will you bring me a photograph of yours? I want to send it to my father by to-morrow's post."

"Of mine? But I have none."

"Not one? Not even an old one?"

"I never had one taken," said Metro simply; "why should I? It would have been money thrown away. Once only outside Paris at a foire, I had one of those taken which are made on glass, and I brought it to Kyra Sophoula, who has it hung up over the sofa."

Theodora looked startled for a moment, then she said: "But you will have a proper one taken now?"

"If you wish it, of course I will."

"Now, tell me something of yourself. I have been boring you all this time with my reminiscences."

But Metro did not smile, and murmured, "Not at all," in answer to the lightly spoken words. He rose from his seat, flushing a little. "You must never, please, say such words again! No man could be bored when you talk; but I — I — how is it possible?" He pressed his hands hard together, until the knuckles whitened. "Why did you say such a thing to me?"

She looked up into his eyes, and met his frowning gaze. "They were silly words," she said; "just a manner of speaking; of course I know it is not possible that you and I should bore each other; we have so much to say — and to learn about each other's life."

Then, as he continued looking at her, she put her eyes down, adding, "You must forgive me — Metro — You see, I am not yet accustomed to being of so much im-

portance. What am I, that my words should count so much?"

Her hand lay open along the back of the sofa: he bent his head and with a little thrill she felt the pressure of his lips in the hollow of her palm. "You are my soul, and my golden love!" he said very low.

Later on, when general good-nights had been exchanged and Metro was looking for his coat in the hall, Costa said to him: "I shall walk home with you, if you do not mind. I have scarcely walked at all since yesterday."

It had been a day of fresh wind and bright sun after the pouring rain of the previous one; a typical Athenian winter day, after the heat of the last weeks, without any interlude of autumn.

Costa looked up at the wonderful brilliance of the stars. "Did you not miss them when you lived in the North?" he said; "I do very often."

"Yes, I missed them; I missed everything of our country."

There was a pause, and then Costa asked: "Have you made any plans yet?"

"Plans? No. We must wait, of course, to see what her father wishes. She — she loves her father very much!"

"Her father —" began Costa, and then stopped short. In a few seconds he concluded rather lamely: "You see she has always lived with him alone."

"To be always with her!" said Metro, in a deep, low voice. "I am trying to believe it. To have the right to be with her every day! To be with her in spring, and to know that the summer will come with its sun blaze and the winter with its north winds, and the spring once more, and the summer and the winter again after that: and that she will be there! — always there!"

"Always there!" echoed Costa dreamily; "making the

joy of life, the whole reason for living! Yes, I suppose it is hard to believe."

Metro turned round suddenly and looked at him. "Why!" he exclaimed; "you know, then! You also — ?"

"I!" and Costa came back with a start to his usual tone of voice. "How should I? Let us take it, my friend, that I have a very vivid imagination."

It was past one o'clock when Costa reached home, and he was considerably astonished to see a light in the study window. Before he could put his key into the lock, the door was opened from inside, and he saw his father, his finger on his lips and a troubled look in his eyes.

"Why, father, what is it? Why have you waited for me? Is anything the matter?"

"Hush! Make no noise, Costa! Come into the study! I do not want to wake the others."

Costa followed his father into the small room, and closed the door softly. "What is it?" he repeated anxiously; for he knew that his father was not of those who make a fuss over trifles.

"The post came in after you left."

"Yes?"

"I had a letter from your Uncle Pandeli, in London —"

"Is he ill?"

"No! No, but — Wait! I will read what he says." He pulled a letter out of his breast pocket and spread it out before him. "The beginning is just an answer to my last letter; then he says: 'Tell Polymnia —' Ah, no! that is a message about her Canadian shares. Ah, here it is!" And he read slowly and distinctly: —

"I had a letter at last from Douka after a six months' silence, written from Paris. He tells me that you wrote to him some time ago concerning those building plots about which Theodora came to Athens. There seems, as far as I can gather from Douka's very unbusinesslike way of expressing himself, to have been some advantageous

offer made for them lately. It is a pity you did not write to me directly about it, but I suppose you must have already accepted or refused the offer, for Douka, with his usual shifting of all responsibility to others, adds that as soon as he found your letter on the subject when he returned from Brittany, he telegraphed to you that he has fullest confidence in his daughter's judgment and to let her act as she thinks best."

Costa put out his hand. "May I see the letter?"

"Take it!"

He took the letter and read the last page slowly over; when he put it down, the father and son looked at each other.

"So — the telegram —" began Professor Manelli.

"Of course."

"And to think that such an idea never crossed our minds."

"How should it?"

"It is so long since I wrote about the building plots. I thought he had simply left my letter unanswered; besides, I expected that when he did take the matter into consideration, he would write about it; there was no reason whatever to expect a telegram."

"Except," said Costa, "the reason that extra expense never counts with him, and that extra trouble does; therefore, he telegraphed. But never mind that now! The question is, what are we going to do?"

"I was thinking it out before you returned; I think we must wait a little; once we know for a certainty that your uncle is in Paris, and that by now he must certainly have received Theodora's and my letters, the second telegram cannot be many hours longer before it reaches us; it may be here any minute now, and there is a chance, after all, that it may be favorable."

"A very remote one."

"But still, let us wait. It would be too cruel for

the poor child to go all through the suspense a second time."

"All right," assented Costa; "but if there is no answer by to-morrow, I shall go and telegraph to him, to clear the situation."

But it was not necessary. About seven in the morning there was a sharp ring at the door; the decided ring of one who wants the door answered at once.

Professor Manelli and Costa came out of their bedrooms on to the upper landing together, and stood waiting for Gerassimos.

When they heard his step on the stairs, Professor Manelli called out: —

"Is it a telegram?"

"Yes, Kyrie, it is a telegram."

"Bring it here at once!"

Costa seized the envelope, and without even looking at the address, tore it open, almost before he had closed the door of the room behind him.

His father stooped over him, and they read it together: —

To Aristidi Manelli,
Professor of the University, Athens.

Most emphatic refusal to entertain mad idea. Discussion useless. Shall write. Kindly instruct Theodora return Paris at once. M. Douka.

Professor Manelli sank down on the edge of his bed; his hands trembled a little and he looked his full age.

Costa read the telegram over once more and flung it on to the dressing-table.

"I *told* you he would treat us as insane!" he exclaimed. "And you see he does." Then he suddenly burst out laughing. "Excuse me, father! But I had lost my dear uncle, and I have found him again!"

CHAPTER XII

THEODORA and Zoe were driving back from Phaleron in an open victoria. The bells had already rung for noon, and they had just taken the turning past the military hospital toward the Arch of Hadrian.

"At least," asked Zoe, "has it done your headache any good?"

"It has almost disappeared; I knew from yesterday that it was only the result of want of air and movement."

"Then why did you shut yourself up in the house all these days? Can you decide things better, closed in between four walls?"

"Sometimes I can; but in this case there was no deciding, only waiting, and I did not want to meet any one or to be obliged to talk. Besides, I am so sorry for my poor uncle that I did not want to make the burden of his responsibility any heavier, and I knew he felt happier having me within call."

"But your uncle likes — your — I mean Metro, immensely."

"I know he does, but still it has been very hard for him. You see, he was terribly distressed when the second telegram came, but it never struck him for a moment that I should not return to Paris at once."

"You could never have done that!" said Zoe quickly.

"Of course not! My father would have been the first to blame me if I did, when he learned all the circumstances. He does not know our mistake about his first telegram, — he does not know that, owing to that mistake, I have given my word. No one," she continued a little proudly, "knows my father as I do; he would never admit that a

Douka should not keep any promise once given, under any circumstances."

"But your uncle —"

"He begs me to wait for my father's letter, at least. Poor uncle! He thinks it his duty to preach filial submission to me — to *me!* To warn me against deciding in a hurry; to advise me to go to Paris first and try gradually to overcome my father's objections. Why, Zoe, just think! How could I leave the man whom I have promised to marry to the uncertainty of weeks, perhaps months of waiting? I feel sure my uncle would despise me inwardly if I did. But he thinks he must say it. He even worked himself up to the point of telling me that I have not known Metro long enough to be so sure of my own judgment."

Just as they were nearing the narrow street of the Manellis' house, they saw a laden postman coming round the corner from that direction.

"Look!" said Zoe, "Perhaps — "

"Yes," assented Theodora; "Costa calculated the letter would come to-day."

She found, as she had expected, her uncle and Costa in the study. The former, seated at the writing-table, was holding an open letter in his hand. The latter, with his arms crossed on the top of the bookcase, was apparently studying the big portrait of the Mavrodanachi children, as though he had never seen it before. He turned round sharply, as Theodora came into the room.

"May I see the letter, my uncle?"

He gave it into her hands, silently, and she took it into the window recess, turning her back to the room as she read it.

It was not very long, and though it had been written on the same day on which her father had received her own and her uncle's letters, the whole tone was studiously light, and as though referring to an annoying, but not in any way serious, episode.

He began by expressing his regret that his dear brother-in-law should have had his important pursuits interrupted by this ridiculous incident. He would never, he wrote, have sent Theodora on a visit to him had he not thought her absolutely superior to these violent fancies of ordinary, impressionable young girls. "But it seems, my dear Aristidi," he added, "that this is a malady from which the wisest of their sex are not immune." He had noticed, he went on to say, in Theodora's letters a growing enthusiasm for this young peasant professor, which, however transitory, he had considered decidedly reprehensible, as calculated to inspire the worthy youth with impossible ambitions, which, it seemed, was exactly what had happened. The very discussion of such ambitions was absurd. And were it not that the present letter was a strictly family one, he would not even have mentioned such an obvious fact as that Theodora could form almost any alliance. It was no secret that she could have married one of the elder branch of the Ypsilantis, settled in Vienna since the Revolution; to the young Marquis de Saint-Yves she had only to hold out her hand; and were it not that she had always objected to the old-fashioned arranged marriages, both the Comnénes and the Phokas had more than once made overtures to him.

"I ask you, my dear brother," the letter continued, "who in our class ever associated a Philippides or any other unknown name ending in 'ides' with the thought of an alliance for our womenfolk? As a baker, — a tailor, — even as a lawyer, or doctor, — most worthy people doubtless: in fact, the very individual in question bears, I know, an excellent scientific reputation, and, as you tell me, a blameless private one, which shows there is nothing personal in what I say; but as a husband! Fie! Has this summer madness, or, to be more exact, autumn madness, made Theodora forget for a moment that she is a Douka? If through any delay of steamers she is

still with you, kindly tell her that I hope she has entirely banished this absurd project from her mind, as I do not even wish to hear it discussed by word of mouth."

When Theodora had read the letter, she brought it back with a quiet "Thank you, my uncle."

Professor Manelli took up a penholder which was before him, looked at it, and put it down again.

"This is very definite," he said; "I know the waiting has been very long for you; but now you see exactly how your father feels." He folded the letter once again. "We were in a way practically certain of his strong feelings on the point, from the wording of the telegram. But, of course, we could not be certain that he would have written at once; we did not know whether an interval of quieter consideration —"

He folded the letter once again in smaller folds, taking scrupulous care that the outside edges of the paper should lie perfectly parallel.

"You must think very seriously now, Theodora, my child," he went on. "There is no use in going all over the same arguments, but you cannot refuse to acknowledge that the choice between the two ways that lie before you now is of the gravest. Costa, as you know, has spoken more than once to — to — young Philippides, who has said that he will abide absolutely by your decision in all things." He lifted a red pencil from the pen tray. "Of course, it is most unfortunate that, owing to the very natural mistake caused by the first telegram, your engagement should have been publicly announced; but if — now — you should decide — I mean, if you were to leave at once — I am sure that in time —"

"Of course," began Theodora, "my father is quite right."

Her uncle put the pencil down, and turned to her with a curious mixture of relief and disappointment in his eyes. Costa, too, started, and took a step toward them.

"He is quite right, from a certain point of view," she continued; "naturally, in ordinary circumstances, we" — with a little smile — "would never think of marriage with a certain class of people; but where my father has not at all understood our letters — perhaps, my uncle, we were both of us too excited, that day we wrote, to be very clear — is that it is not a question here of an unknown 'ides' or other, or of an ordinarily intelligent man sprung from the peasant class; but of a man apart; a man belonging to no class, or rather to all classes. But of course, the principal thing is that my father does not dream that owing to a mistake I have already given my word."

"No one could blame you in this case for taking it back, since it was given under a misapprehension. You thought that you had your father's approval; you find now that you had not; so, if you should decide, after all — "

"You do not understand, my uncle," — and her voice was very clear and resolute, — "I am perfectly decided already."

From where he sat, her uncle put up both hands and clasped her arms as she stood before him. "Theodora! My dear little niece! And your father — ?"

"My father will forgive me absolutely when he knows that my word has been given. One must not obey blindly the first thing that looks like duty. Were I to return to Paris now, to break my freely given word, then my father might well ask whether I had forgotten that I am a Douka! At first, it is only natural, he may be angry with me for some hours, even days; I am quite prepared for it, — but when he sees what a man it is that I — I — love, then he will understand. Is it possible I should not know how my own father will act?"

"Then you mean — ?"

"I mean that I shall write to my father that I am going

to keep my word; that in marrying the man to whom I am already engaged, I am doing only what he would have me do if he knew all the circumstances. If I succeed in convincing my father by letter, then we will either go to him or allow plenty of time for him to come here for — for — my marriage."

Professor Manelli looked very grave. "Suppose that you do not convince your father?"

"Then," — she hesitated a moment, — "then, it will be very hard, my uncle, but I must be married — alone, and go to my father with my husband afterwards. When he knows him, he will understand."

Professor Manelli got up from his chair at the writing table, walked across the room to the door and back again, making a little noise in his throat as though he found it difficult to swallow.

"You know how much I care for you," he said at last, putting his hand on Theodora's arm; "as though you were of my own blood and a child of my own house, but I do not know whether I should be doing right in upholding you in — "

"My uncle," she interrupted, "I have thought of this also; what else had I to do all these days? I perfectly understand that, as my father confided me to your care, if I were to marry in seeming rebellion against his wishes, it might be your duty not to countenance it in any way. I perfectly understand this, and if you decide so, I shall never dream of loving you the least little bit less for it. In that case I shall ask our cousins the Delamanas to take me in, and to let me be married from their house; should they not wish to do this, I shall go to the Laras. You see, both are differently placed from you. I do not think Marco and Roxane will refuse, and I *know* Zoe will not; so" — with a brave smile — "you see I shall not be alone."

Then Costa, who had been sitting on the arm of the

sofa, jumped down and came and stood beside her. "You would not be that in any case," he said quietly. "Whatever line of action my father decides to follow, I know that he will entirely agree with me that there are moments when a cousin becomes a brother, with all a brother's rights and duties; and here is a brother entirely at your service!"

"Costa!"

The long tension gave way, and she clung to him, crying a little, and shaking all over.

"Theodora!" — her uncle's voice was graver than usual, and she looked up with wet eyes and trembling lips. "My son has made me see more clearly into myself. Whatever you decide, our house is yours, and you shall only leave it for your husband's!"

Then he made her sit down on the sofa beside him and patted her hands, and sent Costa to fetch her a glass of water until she was calm again.

Before they left the room she turned to her cousin, and said very simply, "I want to see Metro, please, to-day."

"I will go after lunch, and send him to you. Now, come and eat something. 'Les émotions creusent,' you know."

Soon after luncheon Polymnia took the children out to see about their winter hats, and Professor Manelli shut himself up in his study.

Costa had left the house the moment he had put down his empty coffee cup. "This is your last bit of waiting," he whispered to Theodora; "I shall make it as short as I can."

So she stationed herself at the window in the sitting room and waited. She did not even hold a book in her hands. Instead, she remembered a way she had had, as a little child, of making the time pass. "I shall watch the corner of the street," she said to herself, "and the

seventh man who appears will be he." When the eighth, ninth, and tenth had passed, she decided that it would be the fourteenth or the twenty-first. Then she took to counting. "He will come when I have counted a hundred and forty-seven." But she had passed three hundred when she saw Metro.

He was walking fast, and as he mounted the steps leading to the front door, she saw that he was frowning.

She left the window and when he came into the room, he found her seated in the big chair near the fire. She rose at once as he approached, and held out her hand. But he scarcely touched it, and she saw that he was still frowning.

"I saw your cousin," he began, "and he told me that you wanted me; that is why I came; otherwise — "

"I thank you for coming at once. I want to tell you — "

"Stop!" he cried unceremoniously; "I asked your cousin if your father had sent a letter, and he told me, yes; and I asked him what he wrote, and he said you would tell me yourself; but I insisted on knowing whether your father explains in his letter why it is that he refuses his consent; and your cousin told me that there is no serious reason against me, that no man has spoken ill of me to your father, only that he laughs at the thought of a marriage between us, without giving any reason; and you must tell me, please, if this is so!"

There was a second's pause. "In a way, yes; but my father — "

"Wait!" he interrupted; "I must speak first!" Then, as she colored and bit her lip, he came a step nearer. "Forgive me if I am not as I ought to be with you, but a man can bear so much, and no more — and it is six days now — Listen, please! I have told you how I feel for you, and how I am always going to feel. I am thirty years old, and there has never been any one I wished to marry but you, and there never will be any one else,

even were you to die to-day, and were I to live to be a hundred years old! I know, of course, that I am immeasurably below you, but though you have the blood of kings in your veins, and I have only that of fishermen and boatmen, still, my love is too great to be laughed at by others. It must remain between the two of us! You may send me away if you will. It is your right, perhaps it is your duty; but you must never say, with disdain, 'That man dared to think of me!' You cannot say it, because my love is worthy of a queen. I, who feel it, know that it is so: and no one shall laugh at it, or discuss it, or quarrel over it! It is there for you to stoop and pick up, or for you to pass on your way and leave behind you!"

When he had finished speaking, she had come a step closer and stood looking at him. She had turned rather pale and held one hand tightly in the other. "Why do you say these things? Have I not given my word to you?"

"You are quite free. I mean no woman to be bound to me by a mistake. I give your word back to you."

"And I will not take it. I am glad of the mistake; glad, glad, *glad* of it, because, without it, perhaps it might have been my duty to wait; while now, I have told you that — that I, too, love you, and I tell it to you to-day again, and that no one in the world shall laugh at our love!"

He gave a little, gasping, sobbing cry. It was her name, or it was meant to be, and he hid his face in his hands.

PART II

CHAPTER XIII

THE Lara garden was one mass of brilliant color, and Zoe stood on the gravel path between the broad steps and the gates, drinking in deep breaths of the rose-scented air. Outside the garden gates the dark-brown victoria, with its brown horses and brown liveries, was waiting to take Zoe and Miss Burney on a shopping expedition.

"I filled the rooms with roses this morning, until I had no more vases left; I sent a big bunch to Theodora, and look! You would think the bushes had never been touched. Shall I tell the gardener to cut some for you to take home, when we return, since decidedly you will not lunch here?"

"Yes, do! As many as I can carry. I wish I *could* lunch here, but I promised Eleni Vathi to lunch with her boys when they get back from school, so that she should have a long, free day in Kiphissia."

"What!" said Zoe, with a rather contemptuous little laugh; "the 'merry widow'?"

"It is rather lucky for her boys that she is 'merry' or they would not get much laughter in their lives, poor creatures! You see, she has no one to leave with them, so that if I did not go now and then, she would never get any change."

"Well, I must say, for an unmarried woman, you manage to have more claims on your time than any one I ever knew: you, who ought to be so delightfully and entirely free."

"The only human beings I have ever known 'entirely free,'" said Miss Burney dryly, "were either poor shiftless creatures with useless hands and brains, or else abominably selfish; so if you don't mind, I shan't change."

"Zoe! Zoe! Zoe! Come here a moment, please!"

The voice came from the open window of the study.

"Miss Burney," said Zoe, "suppose you sit down on this bench; Aunt Virginia has a commission she wants me to do for her. If we are lucky, she *may* explain what she wants in a quarter of an hour."

"No," laughed Miss Burney: "I will come and support you."

As they went up the steps, Aunt Virginia opened the front door and came out under the colonnade.

"Zoe, my dear, I wish to know, first of all, whether you intend taking your dog out with you; you have left him in the study, and after you leave he will begin careering all over the house and make himself a general nuisance; I have often repeated that I have no objection to dogs in their proper place, but — "

"He won't trouble you," interrupted Zoe; "I have told Calliope to look after him. Is that all you wanted, Aunt Virginia?"

"Well, my dear," in a soft, lugubrious tone, "if it will not be too great a trouble for you, I should like you to get me some darning-cotton at Pindani's."

"All right; what number?"

"Well, it depends; if you find the 'à la croix' kind, I want No. 85, or is it 87? I am not quite sure, but if you tell the shopman — that little one with the fair mustache, you know — to give you the same that I bought last time, he will know which one. If they should have only the German kind, then the number will be 43B. You see the German cottons have a letter after every number. But I prefer the 'à la croix.' Sometimes the labels get mixed, or are missing from the skeins, because it is not a very tidy shop, you know, but if you open out the cotton, so, on your finger, you will see; the French kind is softer and the German — "

"I know," said Zoe; and began to descend the steps.

Aunt Virginia followed. "I was going to explain," she remarked, in her long-suffering voice, "that the German cotton is more shiny and more tightly twisted, but the French is softer and duller and shows the darn less; so remember, that I prefer the 'à la croix.' The number will be, as I said, 85, or perhaps 89; no, I mean 87! Anyhow, if you ask that nice, civil, little man, with the fair mustache, to give you exactly the same as I bought last time, he will know. Tell him it was the day it rained so hard, and there was no one else in the shop; but he will remember, anyhow, if you mention my name. He is always most obliging, and I make it a point, when I pay a bill about New Year, to give him a little something extra for himself, and, you understand, it is not every one who does that, so he is always 'aux petits soins' with me. Now, you need not be in such a hurry, Zoe! No one is pursuing you! You nearly tumbled over that last step. Have you got your notebook in your bag? You had better put the numbers down, or you will be sure to forget them. Eighty-three; no, I mean 85, or perhaps 87; but if you ask the man, he will tell you."

Miss Burney hurriedly produced a little notebook.

"I will put it down, Kyria Lara. There! 85, or 87 French, you said, or 43B. German. That will be all right; come along, Zoe!"

"Excuse me," continued Aunt Virginia, as she ambled after them down the gravel path. "You must remember that the labels may have got mixed in the box. Pindani's are most obliging, but they are *not* tidy; and if they are missing, you must open out the cotton on your finger, so, and get the threads separate, and you will find the French make softer and — "

Zoe opened her lips to answer, but Miss Burney saw her expression, and interrupted ruthlessly: "Oh, Zoe, look at poor Baloo there at the open window, hoping against hope."

But Baloo, having seen the hats and parasols, and having been lifted and placed on the window seat with a sharp "Sit there, Baloo!" knew quite well that he was not to be of the party. When Miss Burney pointed to him, he wriggled himself closer to the edge of the window seat and gave a last big sigh. He had given up hope, but this last was too much for Zoe.

"I cannot bear to hear a dog sigh," she said suddenly; "it is so utterly sincere, so regardless of producing any effect. He *shall* come, the poor beast. Come, Baloo!" raising her voice.

Baloo poured himself out of the window, and was outside the gates and jumping round the victoria before they had approached it.

Miss Burney helped Zoe into the victoria, and she gave the coachman the first address.

"Wait a minute!" called out Aunt Virginia; "I have not given you the money." And she began diving for a pocket, situated somewhere toward the hem of the dressing-gown.

"I have money," called out Zoe; "go on, Stathi!"

"Well, mind they don't charge you the same price for the German make, because it is fifteen lepta cheaper than the French one; only, as I said, I prefer the 'à la croix,' I would rather give a little more and have — "

But the clatter of the horses' hoofs drowned the rest.

Zoe threw herself back against the cushions with a long-drawn-out sigh.

"She is tiring," confessed Miss Burney, laughing; "she reminds me of the Tar Baby who 'kep' on sayin' nuthin.'"

"Have you much shopping to do?" she asked, after a moment's pause.

"Very little; but I ordered the carriage early, because I want to call at Theodora's afterwards. Do you mind?"

"On the contrary, it suits me perfectly, as I want to arrange about going to church with her."

"Church?" repeated Zoe, with an astonished look.

"Yes; next week is your Holy Week, is it not? and in all the years I have lived in Greece, I have never happened to go to the evening service of the Twelve Gospels on Holy Thursday, and Theodora said she would take me with her to St. Irene."

"The music is beautiful there, they say."

"What! Have you never been?"

"No; the service is too long and there is far too much standing for me."

"Theodora used not to be much of a church-goer," pondered Miss Burney; "but since her marriage, she never misses, I believe."

"Ah, that is because she fancies it would please her father, if he knew of it."

Miss Burney sighed. "Poor child! Is there never a word nor a sign?"

"No; nor ever will be! They have been married nearly a year and a half now, and I see no reason why her father should suddenly relent. He is not made that way. I have heard enough about him from Polymnia Valliadi, and from — her brother, to understand the kind of charming, high-born, selfish brute that he is! He trained his daughter to be a most useful and devoted slave; while she remained with him, he was a model of a father; but as soon as she dared to act independently, and was no longer useful, he seized the good excuse of his outraged noble and fatherly feelings — and — good-bye!"

"You really think he does not care at all?"

"How can he? When I think of that miserable wedding journey of theirs, pursuing him half over Europe, in Theodora's confident hope that a meeting would set all things right, and hearing at every place they came to that he had just left it, it makes my blood boil! At last,

at one place, — Vevey, I think it was, or Lausanne, — where they arrived in the evening, they learned for a fact, the next day, that he had been there in the very same hotel, had heard of their arrival, and had left at dawn, before they awoke! Then Metro rebelled. He declared his wife should not be subjected to any further slights of that kind, and insisted on returning home. When the child was born, last November, Professor Manelli first telegraphed, and then wrote, to his brother-in-law."

"And you mean to say he never answered?"

"Certainly he answered. A Douka, my dear Miss Burney, is always, I would have you know, scrupulous in the discharge of his social debts and his debts of honor; tradesmen's debts do not matter. He wrote at once, acknowledging his dear brother-in-law's telegram and kind letter of such a date, from which he was glad to see that he and all his family were in good health. Then he wrote of outside things, never referring specially to Theodora."

"Did she not write herself?"

"Once, and enclosed the first snap-shot of her baby, the one I took; but of that letter he took no notice whatever. She would have tried again, but Metro would not let her."

"And she obeyed him?"

"Oh, yes, as she always would, only that there never is any question of obeying, except on those two occasions. It is almost pathetic to see Metro always trying to find out what would please her best."

"Yes. I have not seen them very often together, but one notices that at once. He 'looks at her in the eyes,' as the people say here, to guess what she wants. In his quiet way, I believe he is also intensely devoted to the child. So few men take much notice of six-months-old babies."

"*My* father," said Zoe, "never touched me, I believe,

until I was over a year old! It is true," she added with a short laugh, "that I was not a particularly successful specimen; and really, little Anthi is a delightful baby! The way she plunges into your arms when you hold them out to take her is irresistible. Theodora tells me that she has often found Metro sitting by the child and watching her while she sleeps."

"Theodora, my dear, ought to be a very happy woman, notwithstanding her father's obstinacy."

Their shopping did not take very long, even including Aunt Virginia's darning cotton, and it was not yet eleven when Stathi drove them back up the Kiphissia Road, past the Laras' house, and turned the corner of the pleasant wide Street of Plutarch, where Theodora and Metro lived.

The Philippides lived on the top floor and their windows opened on to the little Byzantine church of St. Nicholas, over the way, whose round dome stands out in faded bluish-green in its frame of surrounding cypresses.

The little side door of the house leading round to the back yard was open, and a stout, young woman in a long, blue kitchen apron was beckoning to a perambulating greengrocer, whose black donkey laden with panniers was passing slowly on the other side of the street higher up. She smiled at Zoe with a friendly smile. "The Kyria is upstairs; wait, I will ring the bell for you, and Triantafyllia will open the door in a moment."

She rang the upper of the two bells vigorously, and then turned to wave a peremptory hand to the vegetable-seller. "Petro! Petro! Stop and leave two okes of potatoes!"

Petro brought his beast to a standstill before the little side door and grumbled a little as he moved a load of French beans and salad herbs off the potato pannier.

"Thirty-five lepta were they yesterday, indeed?" he

snorted, in answer to an observation of the stout young cook. "Well, then, go and buy your potatoes from him who sells for the good of his father's soul. For me, I sell to buy bread for my children! And not even three lepta the oke is my profit!"

In the meanwhile the door had been opened by a stolid-looking, fair-haired girl, with a thick, clumsy figure.

"Yes," she answered; "the Kyria is upstairs. Take the trouble to go up and I will tell her."

She preceded them up the winding stairs, stumbling heavily over Baloo, who looked at her solemnly and lifted a deprecating paw. When they reached the little landing at the top, the door of the apartment was open and they passed in.

On the right of a square hall was the sitting room, and adjoining it the dining room, and on the left Metro's study. A doorway, before which hung a curtain of heavy blue linen, led to the bedrooms beyond. The hall was light, and though small gave an impression of space. It was the same with the sitting room, though the few pieces of furniture it contained were of a rather large size.

Zoe had admired and commented on the way in which Theodora had produced this effect.

"Yes," Theodora had agreed; "I like plenty of room."

"So do I, my dear," Zoe had said; "but you seem to make it even when it is not there."

One of Zoe's most vivid memories was of the morning, soon after the Philippides had come to live in this little apartment, when she had helped Theodora to unpack the case of her own special belongings which had been sent to her from Paris, without any comment or explanation.

She remembered the almost feverish hunt for a written word, for a token of some kind; the careful smoothing and

resmoothing of every scrap of packing-paper, for fear something might be overlooked; the desperate attempt to attach some meaning to this or that object.

"See, Zoe, this is a photograph of my mother, which never stood in my rooms; do you think he can have put it in the case himself?" or, "See! Here among my waltzes this one, 'Celle qu'on aime toujours,' is placed on the top of the pile; do you think he can have meant — ?"

But the truth, which Zoe guessed pretty closely, had been that Douka had relegated everything to the servants. It never occurred to him to think of their comments. Servants did not count; they were treated courteously, of course, because he was a Douka, and *noblesse oblige;* but they were only the old Roman *res*, things, of no significance. So he had said: "Pack up everything you remember as belonging to Mademoiselle Douka and send the case to such an address; do not trouble me with any questions."

And Thérése, the maid, who had known Theodora as a little girl, had tearfully collected all she knew to be her own personal belongings, and Justin, the old valet, had packed them carefully, with many a shake of the head.

Zoe and Miss Burney looked through the empty sitting room and dining room in search of Theodora, and then crossed the hall to the study; they found her sitting there at one corner of Metro's writing table, with a large account book before her, surrounded by various little oil-cloth-covered books and innumerable loose slips of blue-lined paper covered with figures. Her gray linen dress was covered with a big white apron and a duster hung over the arm of the chair.

"My dear Theodora!" exclaimed Miss Burney; "you seem plunged in housekeeping this morning!"

"Plunged! Drowning, you mean," laughed Theodora, rising to meet them; "I am so glad you have come; you

are such nice excuses for dropping all this; for really my accounts to-day are like Paul's sums: they come out 'differenter and differenter' each time they are added up. Wait a moment!" — and opening a side drawer of the table, she swept in all the books and papers and turned the key.

"Where is the angel-baby?" asked Zoe; "I want her."

"She is out. But I told Vasiliki to bring her back early, so you must wait and see her."

"We most certainly will."

"Come into the sitting room now!" said Theodora; "I want to show you a plate which my Uncle Aristidi gave me the other day; it is from Rhodes, and of the best kind."

They passed into the sitting room to admire the harmonious contrast of the Rhodes plate, with its dull reds and soft blues, against the dark wood of the low panel which ran all along the top of the bookcase.

Miss Burney dropped into a low chair, placed conveniently close to the second shelf. "Do you know, this is the first time I have happened to see all your books together since you unpacked and arranged them. Oh, Theodora, what a lovely lot! Sometime you must let me come and spend the whole day with them."

"You shall, Miss Burney; and carry off all you like, too."

"It shall be only one at a time, I promise you. I know how horrid big gaps look. But oh, my child, what a funny mixture! How one can see you have lived and read all over Europe. Swinburne next to Pailleron, and Maeterlinck next to the 'Jungle Book,' and Miss Procter side by side with Verlaine! *How* astonished these two would be to find themselves in each other's company!" She pulled out a rather square-shaped, dark-blue book. "Ah, you have 'Peter Ibbetsen'! And in the original edition! He is next to Henry Bordeaux, I see; but Du

Maurier is such a cosmopolitan, he would be at home in any company."

Zoe stooped over the little Irishwoman's shoulder, and stopped her as she was turning the pages. "Look! There is Gogo, and little Mimsey Seraskier! Do you know, those two always remind me vaguely of Nasso and myself as children; only that I have not blossomed out into a magnificent Duchess of Towers."

Theodora laughed a little.

"Why are you laughing?"

"Only because you and Miss Burney are proving exactly what I was telling Metro yesterday — that I believe no one who possesses 'Trilby' and 'Peter Ibbetsen,' and even 'The Martian,' ever handles or dusts them, or changes their places, without dipping into them."

"I know I always do," said Zoe; "I was really sorry when he died. Person-sorry, you know, not just author-sorry."

Miss Burney passed her hand over a long, red-backed row of Victor Hugo.

"Do you still read him? How you used to recite him by the hour at fifteen!"

"Yes; I know it is terribly old-fashioned to admire him nowadays, but I do always. I think there is perhaps no verse, even in Swinburne, that makes me feel the grandeur of the sea more than the last lines in that short poem of Victor Hugo, the one that ends: —

"'C'est le Seigneur, le Seigneur Dieu!'

It is like the crash of a big organ."

"Which is that?" asked Miss Burney; "I don't think I know it."

"Wait! I will find it for you."

Just as Theodora laid her hand on the book she wanted, there was a shuffling outside the door, it was pushed open, and the stolid-looking servant girl appeared. She

stood there looking from one to the other. Her lips opened once or twice, but no sound came from them.

Theodora looked up with a little frown. "What is it, Triantafyllia?"

"Kyria — "

"Well, what?"

"Kyria — the cook says that whatever she tells him the man will not give them for thirty-five lepta; he wants forty, and he will not take less than that."

"I do not understand you," said Theodora, still keeping her hand on the book; "what man?"

"The greengrocer; he will not give them."

"What will he not give?"

"The potatoes; the cook says it is getting late and she must have the two okes of potatoes for the stew, and he will not give them except for forty lepta."

"Does she want money to pay?"

Triantafyllia only answered by throwing up her chin and clicking her tongue against her teeth.

During her first housekeeping experiences this movement had puzzled Theodora considerably, until she had understood that it replaced the negative; however, as she had strictly forbidden its use, she repeated severely: —

"I ask you does the cook want money?"

"No."

"Well, then, why do you come to me? Tell her to buy what she requires."

Triantafyllia wiped her hands nervously down the sides of her apron. "The cook says — "

"Well, what?"

"She says that yesterday Kyria Vassoura's cook told her that at the market the potatoes were thirty lepta the oke, and bigger than these, and that it is a sin to pay forty for them, up here, but that the hours are passing, and that — "

Theodora with a sharp movement put back the book

she had half-drawn out. "Tell the cook to get all she requires, and do not come here again unless I ring for you!"

When Triantafyllia had disappeared, leaving the door open behind her, Theodora turned to the others with a little laugh which had a considerable touch of vexation in it. "You don't expect me to read Victor Hugo's poem now, do you? I will look it out for you some other time. And it is well it was only you, but she would have come exactly in the same way, whatever strange visitors might have been here! I tell her, and tell her, and tell her, and she answers, 'Ye — es, Kyria,' in her stolid way, and the next day in she comes again. Metro says she does not mean it for disobedience — "

"Only," put in Miss Burney, "she just 'thinks' that this time she must come."

"Yes," laughed Theodora; "she is always 'thinking' instead of obeying orders; but you don't know how irritating she can be!"

"Oh," cried Zoe; "does n't she? You, my dear, with good luck, may some day obtain a decent servant; but Miss Burney *never* will! The incompetent ones she keeps for years, because, after having found out all their family affairs and misfortunes, she pities them too much, concluding, and very rightly, that no one else will take them, and when by any chance she gets a really good servant, which has happened once or twice, she promptly decides that it is unfair to keep the poor thing, as she is worth higher wages than she can afford to give, and forthwith sets about looking for a better place for her."

Theodora laughed, and Miss Burney put her hands on Zoe's shoulders and looked into her face. "My dear Zoe, the imagination you have in that very pretty little head of yours would furnish ten ordinary brains!"

"And," said Theodora, "it is a particularly pretty head to-day with that hat on!"

Zoe disengaged herself and limped up to the fireplace,

over which was a small triple mirror framed in dull gilded wood; she mounted on a footstool, and looked at herself steadily for a few moments.

"I wonder," she said at last, "why one should be bound by idiotic conventions. If I really like the lines and coloring with which I happen to have been born, why, in the name of everything logical, should I not say so?"

Theodora smiled. "Say it!"

"Well, I *do* like them! If I had been fair, and pink, and placid, I should not have cared for the type; but as it is, I see my face is pretty; yes, *very* pretty. If it were not, it would be too awful my hobbling along as I do. Nature owed me that, at least!"

Theodora put her arm round her on pretense of helping her down from the high footstool, and at that moment there was a double ring at the bell.

"That's Anthi!" said Theodora; "I know Vasiliki's ring."

All three went out into the hall. Triantafyllia had already opened the door of the upper landing and had pulled the cord which opened the street door below.

A heavy tramping footstep was heard coming up the stairs, accompanied by a sing-song murmur of "Now the little golden child will drink its little milk; and then the little golden child will lie down in its little bed, in its little white sheets, and go 'nanni-nanni.'"

At the turn of the stairs a broad, white-aproned "dadda" wearing a brown kerchief round her hair, appeared carrying a little child about six months old.

Theodora ran down five or six steps and held out her arms.

The nurse stopped, held the child a little away from her, and looked up at the two leaning over the stairs, as though to say, "Now, look what you will see!"

The child looked about wonderingly for an instant, then catching sight of her mother, a smile began in the eyes and spread all over the little round face. She put out her hands, bent her head almost as one preparing to dive, and with a quick little jerk flung herself into the outstretched arms.

"Oh, the angel-baby!" cried Zoe, as Theodora came up to them holding her daughter very closely; "oh, Miss Burney, do look at her! Is n't she just the model a painter would choose if he were painting a type of babyhood in general?"

And she was right. The little round limbs, the perfectly shaped little head, barely covered with a halo of soft brown hair, the wide-open, innocent baby eyes, the little, indeterminate features, might have been the original of many a "bambino" or cherub of the old masters.

"And you know she does not keep that welcome only for her mother; she will come to me in the same way. Won't she, Theodora?"

"She does often, only now she is rather sleepy; are you not, little Sweetness?"

"Oh, she only wants a little persuading; Anthi, my angel, come to Auntie Zoe!"

Anthi rubbed her head against her mother's cheek and looked serious.

Zoe came a step nearer and held up her arms appealingly. "Little angel, *are* you going to disappoint me?" And as though the appeal had touched the "little angel," she gave a sudden little forward plunge, and landed so suddenly into Zoe's arms as to make her stagger against Miss Burney for support.

"Is n't she wonderfully forward for her age?" asked Miss Burney, holding up both Zoe and the child. "Please enlighten my old-maiden ignorance on the subject."

"I really don't know," said Theodora; "you see, she is the first baby with whom I have ever been intimately

acquainted. But she did that almost from the time she could make any independent movements. It was to Monsieur Arnoux she did it first, and I think he was never prouder of anything in his life. Now she must have her sleep; see how her eyes are shutting! There, take her, Vasiliki!" And she handed the child to the dadda, who disappeared with her behind the blue curtain, murmuring as she went, "Now the little golden child will drink her little milk."

"She is not at all like either you or her father," said Miss Burney.

"No; she is exactly like my mother. I have some portraits of her as a very young girl, and I can trace the likeness feature for feature. Even my Uncle Aristidi can see it quite clearly."

There was a short silence. Zoe had seated herself at the hall table and was building a pagoda with the visiting cards in the bronze plate. Miss Burney looked at her for a moment, and then suddenly asked Theodora: "Do you correspond with your Cousin Costa? Is he likely to come to Greece this year?"

"Costa writes to no one regularly, except to his father. Of course I hear all his general news from my uncle. Sometimes, in a blue moon, he writes me a long letter when he has seen or heard anything which he thinks would interest me. But I have not had one for a long time. I don't think he will be able to leave London this year; in fact, I am sure he will not, as the second secretary is away."

"What time is it?" asked Zoe, getting up suddenly and overthrowing her castle of cards. As she spoke, the bells rang out all over the town. "Noon already! And father said he wanted lunch to be punctual to-day. Come, Miss Burney!"

With the handle of the door in her hand, Miss Burney turned round. "What is the matter with my memory

to-day? And I who never mean to get old! Theodora, I came about the church next week; does our agreement hold good?"

"Of course. It is next Thursday, and the service begins at five. It is very long, I warn you, and will last until eight or even more; but the music is beautiful. You will come back here and dine with us afterwards, will you not?"

"Yes, my dear, with pleasure; where shall we meet?"

"Let us both be at Eleftheroudaki's bookshop at half past four, or even at a quarter past, and then, if one is there before the other, there are always the books and papers to look at."

"Very well; a quarter past four inside the shop; I shall be there." And she passed her arm through Zoe's to help her down the stairs.

CHAPTER XIV

It was nearly half past one when Metro let himself in with his key and came singing up the stairs.

Theodora came out to meet him, from behind the blue curtain, a smile in her eyes and her finger on her lips: "Hush — hush — she sleeps!"

Metro threw his hat on the hall table and veered round quickly. "She is well?"

"Well? Yes, of course, perfectly well; why do you ask?"

"Does one ever know! Illnesses come so quickly to little children."

"Why should we think of them? She came back from her walk as pink as a little rose. Zoe and Miss Burney were here, and she was *so* good with them! Then she drank all her milk, and wanted more, and then she fell asleep."

"Shall I go in and see her?"

"If you like; but it might disturb her, and she is sure to be awake long before you go out again. Do you know you are very late, Metro; was there any extra work at the Museum? It is half past one."

"Is it?" said Metro, astonished. "No, there was no extra work; I left the Museum soon after the bells rang for noon, but I met Andriotti, and I got talking with him and Dandolo at Zacharatos's."

Metro had very rarely any idea of the hour of the day. He worked until he was tired, he slept until he awoke naturally, he talked until he had nothing more to say, and only when he felt hungry did it strike him that it might be near the dinner hour. Punctuality, except if he had given his word to any stranger, seemed to him a very superfluous quality, indeed. At first he had not

even been able to understand why any fixed hours were necessary for meals, and he had continually assured Theodora that anything would do for him, that she must never wait when she felt hungry. It was only when he realized that for some mysterious reason she really objected to the uncertainty of his movements and that she invariably waited for him that he attempted to be at home within an hour or so of the fixed time; but it was never a great success. He could not quite forget the days when bread and olives or bread and cheese were ready at any moment; when the return of "the man" settled the dinner hour. And in Paris, of course, there had been no settled home life. He had dropped into little cheap restaurants whenever he had felt inclined. The strictly settled hours, the cook being ready, the dinner getting spoiled by waiting, the upsetting of the housework by the postponement of the servants' dinner hour, were all new and strange to him. In the evenings, especially, when he knew they were not going out anywhere, he would often return at nine or half past nine; once it had even been ten.

"Is it really half past one?" he repeated.

"Yes," said Theodora; "it is just striking. Aglaia dished up the pilaf at half past twelve; she thought you were here; and I sent it back to be kept warm."

"Well," he said, "we shall eat it spoiled; it is no great matter."

Theodora hesitated for the fraction of a second. Then she passed her arm through his, and led him toward the dining room. "No," she said; "it is no great matter."

As they sat down to the table his eye looked round searchingly. "Where is your lemon?" he asked, for he knew — as he had learned to know all her intimate little habits, the chair she preferred, the pens she used, and the scent she chose — that she liked to have a cut lemon beside her at table.

"She has forgotten it," said Theodora in French; "she only remembers once in a way."

Metro called to the slow-moving servant girl, a little sharply. "Triantafyllia!"

She advanced, carrying the dish of pilaf, one strap of her apron hanging loosely behind her back.

"Where is your mistress's lemon?"

The girl started, stumbled, recovered her balance, plumped the dish back on the sideboard, and turned toward the door. "At once! I will fetch it at once!"

"Stop!" ordered Metro; "have I not told you many times that you must put a cut lemon every day beside your mistress's plate?"

"Ye — es."

"Well, why is it not there?"

"I — I — forgot it."

"Now, listen to me! If your memory has a malady of some sort, you must cure it! If you were an old woman, well and good; but a young girl of your age to forget so easily, it is a shame! Now, you are to mind and put the lemon there *before* we sit down to-morrow, and every day after that, or else I shall be very angry with you. Do you hear?"

"Ye — es, Kyrie."

"Very well. Now, go and get it!"

In a moment she returned empty-handed. "Kyrie — "

"Well?"

"There is no lemon in the house. Aglaia forgot to buy some this morning."

"Let her run to the shop round the corner, and get some at once! 'He who has not a good head, must needs have good legs'!"

"She says she has no money."

Metro searched in his pockets.

"I have nothing but a five drachmæ note. Theodora, will you give her some lepta?"

"It really does not matter for to-day," said Theodora.

"No, please; send her, or they will always be forgetting."

Theodora got up from the table a little wearily and went into the study where she kept her money. When she had given the coppers to Triantafyllia and returned to the dining room, she found that Metro had taken the dish of pilaf from the sideboard, helped himself, and begun eating.

"Sit down!" he said; "your food will be quite cold!"

And she remembered when she used to find her father, standing, waiting for her, beside the table, and Justin waiting to push forward her chair and bring her footstool. She looked around her at the plain room with its gray tinted walls, at the square table with the few late oranges in a low dish, and a small bunch of Zoe's roses in the middle; she noticed Metro's hurry to get through the meal, the big lumps of bread he broke off, the quick pushing aside of his plate when he had finished, the jumping up to the sideboard to get another before the slow-moving maid could bring it, the nervous crumbling of his bread on the cloth, and she remembered the great white Viennese dining room, or the darker, cozier London one, with the small round table shining with silver and sparkling with wine lights; she remembered the perfection of service, the noiseless tread of the servants, the orderly sequence of the courses, and above all, she remembered the quiet, leisurely air of the man who had always been waited upon.

When the lemon was brought to the door by the blue-aproned cook, Metro looked at it, felt it, cut it in two, and passed it over to his wife, saying, "It is not quite a Poros lemon plucked from the tree, but it is a fresh one for Athens." And as he spoke, his eye rested on her. And when Theodora saw his look, she hated herself for remembering the past so vividly; but she remembered.

Early in the afternoon, after Metro had gone to the University and when the child was out again, Theodora opened the drawer into which she had pushed all her account books and set to work once more.

Sometimes, for all her self-control, — for above all vulgarity she held disputes on money matters the worst, — she could not help getting impatient with Metro's strict calculations and fore-reckoning of expenses, and even sometimes with his scrupulous integrity in trifles. She would certainly have said herself that she knew what it was to have to practice economy; that she had done so all her life; but it had been on big lines, such as doing without yachts and motor cars, not staying at the Ritz, or the Carlton, avoiding the well-known dressmakers; but she had never conceived the little economies which went to make up her daily life in Athens. She had lived all her life with a man whom the simple fact of not having ready money to pay never prevented from getting anything he fancied. Of course, he would pay eventually, so why deny himself when the need or the desire was pressing?

Before their marriage, Metro had drawn on a little sum laid aside for emergencies, to make some very necessary additions to his wardrobe. Costa Manelli had taken him to his tailor, and the result had been an afternoon suit and evening clothes better fitting than he had ever possessed previously, in which his tall, lean figure showed to its best advantage. Theodora had been delighted with the improvement in his appearance, but as her old English nurse had been wont to call it, Metro was "cruel hard on his clothes," and they soon began to show signs of wear, so that he gradually dropped the habit he had at first adopted, out of deference to Theodora's wishes, of changing into a better suit in the evening. She complained playfully at first, and afterwards with more insistence.

"But," he had said very simply and unanswerably, "the clothes will not last so long if I wear them every day."

One day in despair Theodora picked out an old and distinctly threadbare suit which he was much addicted to wearing and gave it away to a poor man, thinking Metro would thus be forced into ordering a new one. When he discovered the disappearance of the clothes, he said quietly: "That was a pity, they would have done for some time longer; but it does not matter." And he unearthed an old frayed linen jacket which he took to wearing when they were alone.

Poor Theodora was horrified. "But, Metro, you *must* get another suit! That is really why I gave the old one away."

"My child," he had said, "since I know it pleases you, should I not have ordered it at once, the first time you spoke of it, if I could?"

"But you *cannot* go about in this old thing!"

Metro smiled. "But I do, you see. After all, what does it matter? When we expect any one, I will wear the best suit."

"And I? Do I not count?"

"You!" Metro opened his eyes in genuine astonishment; "how can it make a difference to you what I wear?"

And Theodora was silent. She was ashamed to confess that it could, and did.

She pored over her account books this warm April afternoon until the clock struck half past four, then she rose, stretched her arms high above her head, and pushed all the notes and papers back into the drawer again; the budget was nearly ready; an hour to-morrow morning would finish it, and she had promised to go to the Manellis', where Polymnia had an afternoon bridge

party. Theodora did not play herself, but there was always help required in entertaining non-players and in giving tea. When she passed behind the blue linen curtain into her bedroom, she did not feel at all inclined to dress; and though she had explained exactly to Triantafyllia which dress she intended to wear, it was the wrong one which was spread out on the bed. For a moment the desire almost mastered her to ring for a cup of tea and lie down flat on the long sofa for the rest of the afternoon, but she knew Polymnia was counting on her, and she decided that perhaps the walk as far as her uncle's house would freshen her up. She rang the bell sharply, and waited for a few minutes; then she rang a second time. At last Triantafyllia appeared, flushed and struggling with the strap of her apron.

"Why did you not come at once when you heard the bell?"

"I could not come, Kyria; I was changing my dress."

"I have told you many times that I wish you to be dressed by three o'clock."

"I could not to-day, because I was helping Aglaia to clean out the kitchen, and it would be a sin to dirty the new dress."

"Let Aglaia do her own work, if you please, in future, and remember to be dressed at the time I told you."

"Ye — es, Kyria."

"I told you I wanted the brown dress."

"Is this not brown?"

"No," said Theodora impatiently; "this is gray. I mean the brown one with the black silk sash."

"Ah," said Triantafyllia triumphantly, "the one with the little black balls hanging; I know now." And she went off with the gray dress over her arm.

Theodora had never needed, before her marriage, to go into uninteresting details. Justin and Thérése had always supplied them automatically and without

any asking of foolish questions. She had simply stated, in good time, whether she intended to pay visits, to drive, to walk, to go shopping, or to a reception, or to stay at home, and in accordance with her plans the proper shoes, wraps, purse, card case, or house dress, and well-built fire in the sitting-room were forthcoming. Did she return tired or with a headache from a walk or an excursion, it simply meant that her room was darkened, that cushions were heaped up just right at the end of the sofa, and that the hot tea or cool lemonade was brought to her before she thought of asking for it.

Just as she was leaving the room, Triantafyllia asked her: "Could I, if you please, go out for an hour? There is something I must get to-day."

"Yes, you may go, but see first that Aglaia has finished her cleaning, so that she may be dressed to answer the door."

"I thank you very much, and" — nervously — "if it would be easy, could I, if you please, have some money?"

"How much do you require?"

"I — I — do not know exactly; perhaps ten drachmæ, perhaps more."

"Then I had better give you the rest of your month's wages" — and Theodora made the account rapidly. "You asked me for five drachmæ on account a fortnight ago, and there was the change from that bill which I told you to keep, four drachmæ and sixty lepta; that makes nine drachmæ, sixty, so now you want twenty drachmæ and forty lepta more to make thirty drachmæ, your wages for April. Is that right?"

"I — I — suppose it will be so."

Theodora bit her lips, drew a piece of paper toward her, wrote down the account, and read it out slowly, pointing to each item with her pencil.

"Now," she asked sharply with rising impatience, "have you understood; is that quite correct?"

Triantafyllia started, rubbed her hands down the sides of her apron, and answered very humbly: "Of course; of course, Kyria, since you say so. Your nobility would never cheat a poor girl, I am sure!"

Theodora flushed angrily. "How dare you speak to me in that way?"

Triantafyllia, entirely bewildered, stammered out: "I — I — said nothing, Kyria; I meant — "

Theodora opened her bag, counted out four five-drachmæ notes and four coppers, and placed them on her toilet table.

"There is your money! Take it, please. I shall ask your master to explain it to you this evening, since I cannot succeed."

Then she went downstairs, let herself out, and walked the few steps into the Kiphissia Avenue. She had intended walking all the way, but as she was rather late, and the tram-car was just passing, she hailed it, and finding one of the single seats free, sank into it with relief. She let down the window so that the air might blow on her face, and succeeded in making her mind a complete blank until the car stopped behind the Academy and she saw with a start that she had been carried considerably beyond her stopping place.

CHAPTER XV

Polymnia, busily engaged in welcoming newcomers, finding seats for all the players at the card tables, and handing round cups of tea and chocolate, hailed Theodora's arrival with sincere joy.

"My dear, I thought you had abandoned me! Do see what Kyria Papastathi will take; she has nothing before her, and I must go and talk to the Vranos."

So Theodora looked after Kyria Papastathi, who was fanning herself vigorously, and looking more like an "unmade bed" than ever; gave a second cup of tea to the wife of one of the secretaries of the English Legation; talked her way slowly through the crowded room, until with a smile of real pleasure she came to a stop beside Nasso Lara, who made her sit down in the window seat, and insisted on bringing her some tea and some little maraschino iced cakes, which, he told her, were the best things on the tea-table.

"And I've tasted most of them, so I know," he added. "How is the angel-baby?" he asked as he sat down beside her.

"She is as well as she can be. She plunged so violently into Zoe's arms this morning that she nearly threw her down."

"Yes, I know, Zoe told me; I had lunch there."

"Did you finish learning that new song of Tosti's? You know I want you to sing it at my house next week."

"Oh, I shall know it all right. In fact, we meant to practice it with Zoe after lunch to-day, but we proposed and Aunt Virginia disposed."

"Had she a headache or did she want to go to sleep?"

"Oh, dear, no! 'In my young days, we were taught not to give way to trifling ailments or to indolence.'" Nasso's imitation of his aunt's soft, lugubrious tones was so exact that Theodora laughed until some of her tea was spilled over into her saucer. "No, it was simply one of her nagging days, and she was going on at Zoe about some darning-cotton which she had n't matched, or something, without stopping to breathe."

"Poor Zoe! Sometimes I wonder that she contents herself with whistling and leaving the room."

"Well, she was going to answer back to-day; I saw it by the way she was tightening her lips, so I stepped into the breach."

"How?"

"Oh, easily enough. I only have to mention carelessly various new things, which I say I intend to buy, and Aunt Virginia comes down on me for extravagance. She is always explaining to me all I could save out of my pay. Then, when I had had about enough of it, I took Zoe out for a drive and left Aunt Virginia making calculations on a bit of paper for an ideal budget for me. All the same, you know, I'm terribly sorry sometimes for Aunt Virginia, because life and all its good things are almost over for her, and she 's never had them!"

Theodora's eyes softened as she looked at him.

Just then they were interrupted by Amédée de Sabry, who stopped to ask Nasso if he had heard any further details about the fatal boating accident at Phaleron.

"No," said Nasso; "except that I don't know whether you heard that when the poor fellow's body was found, his legs were entangled in the ropes of the boat; a man told me as I was coming up from Piræus."

"Of whom are you speaking?" asked Theodora.

They told her it was a certain man of the name of Karoni, whom she knew by sight; he had been drowned

while out in a little sailing boat just outside Phaleron, on the previous afternoon, when the wind had been so high. A sudden unexpected gust and the boat had turned right over in a moment.

"Oh, poor fellow!" cried Theodora; "a dark, rather handsome man; I remember him; and quite young, too! How horrible!"

"Well," said Nasso suddenly, "I don't know. For his poor wife, of course, it is sickeningly horrible — but for him — he had tasted and enjoyed all the good things of life; and he will never suffer now from any abominable long-drawn-out illness, nor ever feel his strength leaving him little by little, and old age coming on. I'd rather like such a death myself, I think."

"Well, my friend," said De Sabry, "being an officer, you have some chances of having your wish fulfilled."

"Ah, that depends upon whether the grandmotherly Great Powers, one of whom you have the honor of representing, will ever let us fight!"

Close to one of the bridge tables, Smaragda Paschali, a late arrival, was standing sipping a cup of chocolate. A silver chain purse was on the table beside her.

"My dear Polymnia, I must say it is kind of you to have kept a place for me; I never intended to be so late. But the cook wanted something at the very last moment; you know what those servants are! and when I was at the corner of the street, I found I had forgotten my purse; so I had to go back. And would you believe it, I found Periclaki outside our door, running after me with it. He knew that I was coming to a bridge party, and he saw that I had left it behind on the chair. I don't say it because he is mine, but really that child is a golden child! You cannot think how thoughtful he is! This chocolate 'tourta,'" she added, accepting a piece of cake from Polymnia, "is really excellent. Decidedly, Polymnia, your cook is much cleverer with sweets than

with other dishes. Oh, yes, she is! I have often noticed it, and you know I am a good judge."

And then, pressed by a rising murmur of voices, she settled down to play.

Theodora left her uncle's house a little after seven. It was a beautiful evening, as beautiful as the day had been, and she determined to go round by the Kiphissia Avenue, instead of taking the short way home by the Kolonaki Square. As she came down into the Avenue of the University, she remembered that the nurse had told her in the morning that Anthi's baby-food was all gone, and she concluded that she would just have time to go and get a new tin. So she turned down one of the side streets, and walked rapidly downhill toward the many lights of Stadium Street. She bought the food, and was just passing before the lighted window of a flower shop, when a burst of music came to her from the Square where the military band was playing.

The piece sounded so intensely familiar that she stopped short in puzzled bewilderment. Then in a flash it came to her. It was the introductory movement of a waltz, which she had often played, and which she had heard for the first time in Vienna, seven or eight years ago. It was called "La joie de vivre," and it had been played by an orchestra, conducted by the composer himself, at a charity fête given at one of the big hotels. It was, she remembered suddenly, in aid of the home for "The White Sisters."

How vividly all the details of that evening came crowding back. She could hear the exact tone of her father's voice, clear and vibrating, the low laugh of his answer to her chatter, while all around her were the lights, the smell of delicate food, the busy coming and going, the tall plants of the hotel *perron*. For a moment she closed her eyes, and stood quite still, trembling a

little; then, as she opened them, she saw a victoria come to a stop before her and a man jump out. Without waiting to ask if the carriage were free, she climbed blindly into it, and leaning back against the cushions closed her eyes.

The driver bent down toward her over his seat. "Where are we going, Kyria?"

She roused herself sufficiently to give the address, and closed her eyes again. As the horse clattered up the narrow street toward the higher quarters of the town, a few hot tears forced their way through her closed eyelids; it seemed to her for a moment as though the very strength of her yearning must bring back the living presence of the absent. She tried to fancy her father seated beside her, and she pressed one palm tightly against the other, forcing herself to feel another handclasp than her own.

But before the victoria turned down the Street of Plutarch, she had wiped her eyes, and when it stopped before the house she sprang out and rang the bell herself. Metro, for all she knew, might be at home already!

However, he did not arrive until half an hour later, and she had had time to wash her face and change into a loose tea-gown. When he arrived, she was holding the evening newspaper, and looked up at him with a smile.

He told her that Monsieur Arnoux, Andriotti, Dandolo, one of the professors of the University, and perhaps two other men were coming after dinner to look at some of his books and to settle a discussion which they had begun in the afternoon, and she went at once to tell the cook not to let the fire go out, as plenty of coffee would be required.

When dinner was over she stayed behind a moment in the dining room to straighten the sideboard cloth. There was a cup of very pretty Viennese porcelain which

generally stood there. She had drunk milk out of it as a child, and Anthi was just beginning to use it. Theodora took it up in her hand and called to the maid, who was just leaving the room.

"Triantafyllia, where is the saucer of this cup? You know that I like things kept together."

"It — it — is not here."

"Go, and fetch it, if you please, and put it with the cup; it must not be used for anything else."

"Ye — es, Kyria."

Theodora followed Metro into the sitting room, where he was taking his coffee, and began to look for the poem which she had promised Miss Burney to find. In a moment Aglaia, the stout young cook, put her head in at the door.

"Kyria!"

"What is it?"

"Triantafyllia is terribly upset; that saucer — "

"Well?"

"It came into many pieces in her hand yesterday, just as she was wiping it. And she was ashamed to tell you. This afternoon, when she asked leave to go out, she went all over the world to find one the same; but at none of the shops could she find it."

"Very well," said Theodora stiffly. But it was the last straw, and when the door was closed, as she stood there beside the bookcase, she suddenly let her head drop on her folded arms, and began to cry a little.

Metro's arms were round her in a moment, and his face, troubled and puzzled, was pressed close against her hair.

"What is it, my child? You must not cry! You *must* not! Was it of value, the little plate? Did some one give it to you?"

"I *did* care for it; but it is not only that; little by little she is breaking all my pretty things; and she is

so shiftless, so unmethodical. She can do nothing well! I — I — cannot have patience with her any longer."

"That is a pity," said Metro gravely; "Marika will be sorry." For clumsy Triantafyllia was the younger sister of Marika, Metro's protégée, now happily married to her Yoryi. "Also," he continued, "she is honest, and a good girl."

Suddenly Theodora drew herself upright. "I *hate* good girls!" she exclaimed; "I am sick and tired of them; I want a capable servant."

Metro did not answer for a moment. He walked to the other side of the bookcase, pulled out a book, looked at the title, unseeingly, and put it back again; then he sat down in the armchair, and took up the newspaper.

"Very well," he said slowly; "I understand; and I do not wish on any account that you should be vexed or troubled about such things. I will tell Marika that I will find another place for her sister, and you must ask your cousins to help you to find a servant with more experience, who has served in good houses; if the pay is a little more — it does not matter."

Theodora wiped her eyes, and going up to him, put her hand on his shoulder. "Metro, you must not take me so seriously! I was a little nervous; you know there are some days that go crooked from the morning. I know we cannot afford higher wages. And as you say, Triantafyllia is very willing; I will try to have more patience and to show her; there are some things she does quite nicely; for instance, she makes perfect tea, — I never tasted nicer. No, Metro; do not torment yourself! It will all come right."

"How should I not torment myself? It is only when I see you quite content that I can be happy. Do you think I do not know? This evening when I came in, and you were holding this newspaper, could I not see

that you were not looking at it? Something had troubled you while you were out and you were thinking of it!"

She looked at him sharply. "How could you know?"

"How should I not know, since it is you? You tell me not to torment myself. Is it not the worst torment — hell's torment — for me to see grief in your eyes?"

Theodora stooped over him and, taking his head between both her hands, turned his face up until she could look down into his eyes.

"Metro, it was nothing. A passing memory! A moment's sorrow! But it is not fair that you should suffer. What do you find lacking? Tell me! Have I failed in anything? In companionship? in interest? Have I let you live any of your life alone? If I have, tell me! If I have let any part of it be lonely and hungry, I want to know. I *must* know!"

He took her hands in his and held them to his lips. "There is nothing to know; nothing! You are the sweetest wife a man could have! God knows you are! Only — "

"Only what, Metro? Say it!"

"Since you wish to hear it, I mean that though you have never let me lack for anything that you can do for me, still I see that there is something missing in your life which I cannot give, and that kills me! I want to get for you everything in the world that you wish to have!"

Theodora let her hands drop when he freed them and moved a few steps away.

"Metro," she said, a little wearily, "what is the use of going over all the old ground; I am afraid you want impossible things."

He started up and seized her in his arms, holding her very closely.

"You shall not say that! Only death makes things impossible. Listen, my wife; things will right themselves. At first, perhaps I was not certain, but now that we

have the child, I *know*. Do you think in the years to come, however she might happen to anger me, whatever she were to do, that I should not always remember she was my child? Can blood become water? I might hold my anger against her for a long time, perhaps; one does not know; but should I not open my heart to her at last?"

He sat on the little divan and pulled her down beside him, keeping her head in the bend of his arm.

"Oh, Metro, are you sure? It is so long to wait!"

"Patience, my child! Some day, when your father comes to Greece and sees you again, and the little one, he will forget all his anger; it will be like a bad dream that is passed. And he will call us to come to him."

"And then, Metro?"

"And then," he went on, rocking her a little backwards and forwards as though he were soothing a little child to sleep; "and then, he will find us, his children, with nothing but love and respect in our hearts for him waiting patiently. Believe me; I know the day will come."

Just then there was a ring at the door and Metro disengaged himself. A moment later Monsieur Arnoux came into the room alone.

"The others are not coming?"

"They are outside."

As he bent over her extended hand, Theodora smiled at him a little reproachfully. "Monsieur Arnoux, since you were coming this evening, why did you not come a little earlier, and dine with us? It is so long since you have been."

"Madame, it is charming of you to find it long, but in reality it is but eight days, and you know I always fear to be indiscreet."

"If you say that again, you will force me to send you an official invitation every three days. Surely you

know how glad we are to have you; and you also are pleased to come, are you not?"

"That goes without saying."

"Well, then?"

"Well, then, you are goodness itself, and I implore your forgiveness. In token of it may I come to luncheon next Sunday, and bring at the same time to little Anthi her first Easter egg?"

"Oh, Monsieur Arnoux, how kind of you! But I am afraid she is too small to appreciate it."

"Not at all. It will be bright-colored, and make a noise, and when she throws it down it will not break. Of course, she sleeps at this hour; naturally it would not be possible — "

Theodora smiled. "On the contrary, it is quite possible. Her nurse is at her supper, and I have left the door of Anthi's room a little ajar, to hear if she should cry. Come with me, and we will see if she sleeps soundly!"

And with a beaming smile on his round face the little old man followed Theodora on tiptoe behind the blue curtain.

When they returned to the sitting room, the other men were all settled in the various chairs and on the divan. She greeted them all with the perfect ease which was hers both by inheritance and by training, inquired after Dandolo's mother and sister; thanked Andriotti for a French book which he had lent her, and spoke a few words to one of the other men, who was a journalist called Vanoussaki, on one of his articles in the previous day's paper, which showed him that she had not only read it, but understood it and remembered it.

It was not the first time by a good many that she had been present at these informal archæological meetings, but the endless discussions, the accounts of new discoveries, the enthusiasms over them, were still new to her, and she liked to follow the way in which the

talkers slipped from one subject to another, sometimes returning to the first, sometimes losing it entirely in the heat of the subsequent discussion.

Triantafyllia was rung for at intervals to renew the relays of coffee and to empty the overflowing ash trays, and the sense of intimate companionship, of good fellowship, of talk worth the talking and the listening to, lay upon the scene as undeniably as the wreaths of tobacco smoke, which hung thickly above them.

CHAPTER XVI

It was still comparatively early when Miss Burney and Theodora reached the Church of St. Irene on the Thursday afternoon of Holy Week, so they were able to edge their way through the crowd until they reached the top of the women's wing on the right-hand side, where a timely tip of Theodora's to one of the attendants procured them two chairs.

The heavy gilded candelabra had only just been lighted and were still gently swaying between the massive pillars from which sprang the Byzantine arches of the body of the church. The great white eagle on the low marble pulpit spread out empty wings, for no open book rested on them to-day: all the service would take place in the nave.

Every moment more people were coming in, and very soon from where the two stood they could see nothing but one compact mass of dark heads, with the marble pillars rising white from among them.

Suddenly the bells began ringing for the service, and almost before they ceased, came the four-voiced "Alleluia" and the special "Kyrie Eleison" of Holy Week. Theodora had not been well enough the previous year to attend the long services, and the year before that she had been in Geneva at Easter time, and had gone with her father to the Russian church there; the services had been magnificent and the men's voices deep and sonorous as an organ, but the strange language had made everything seem unfamiliar, so that her memories went back three years before to the day when she had stood in the Greek church of Moscow Road in London.

How every little detail of that day came back to her! The dark, lowering sky of that April afternoon, the pouring rain, and how wet she had got in running from the cab to the door of the church. She remembered how her father, while patting her shoulders dry with his handkerchief, had said: "There is an English poet, little daughter, who has said, 'O to be in England now that April 's there!' but he sensibly took care to be in Italy when he wrote it."

The fall of a book behind her brought her back to Athens and the present with a start. The choir was singing the quaint Byzantine antiphonies of the day: the one about the "iniquitous Judas" who, when the "treacherous apostle" was indicated, did not "wish to understand," with the long, wailing note held by children's voices; and after it, the beautiful response, repeated again and again, "Glory to Thy longsuffering, O Lord! Glory to Thee!"

The chanter read the familiar *troparion*, beginning, "When the glorious apostles," and the priest announced the reading of the first gospel. As a surging tide of water the people swayed forward nearer the gate of the templon. Those who were seated rose, and those who held books found their places with a great rustling of leaves.

"Now," began the sonorous voice of the young black-bearded priest, "is the Son of Man glorified . . ."

Mechanically Theodora made the sign of the cross, and taking Miss Burney's little English Testament found the place for her, whispering as she did so, "This first gospel is very long; it lasts twenty minutes; if you sit down behind me in my chair no one will notice you."

But Miss Burney shook her head; when she was in Athens, she meant to do as the Athenians do.

The voice of the young priest went on; a beautiful voice — sonorous and clear, reaching to every corner of the great church.

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

Ah, the divine assurance, the beauty of that promise!

"Whatsoever ye shall ask!" *Whatsoever* — not simply anything necessary, anything which a higher power might consider beneficial, anything good and profitable; but *whatsoever!* Even reunion after long separation — soul-separation as well as bodily separation — even that! The wiping-out of old mistakes, old refusals, old hardness; the beginning again with a clean sheet with the old perfect understanding and the old enthusiasm: "Whatsoever ye shall ask!"

Ah, God! If only the words might be true as well as beautiful! She envied those who had lived happily and placidly enough to retain their faith in them. But she? Had she not asked, and asked, and asked!

"Father!" rang out the voice of the young priest; "those whom Thou hast given me, I will that where I am they also may be with me!"

How her whole soul echoed that cry!

And now the first gospel was ending. The priest intoned the last words as he slowly closed the great golden Bible; "over the brook Kedron where was a garden into the which He entered, Himself and His disciples."

Books were closed with sudden snaps and there were sighs of relief as weary women, tired out with many days of fasting, sank into their chairs. The words of the ninth antiphony rolled through the church.

"The thirty pieces of silver, the price of the priceless One! Watch, then, and pray, so that ye enter not into temptation . . . for the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. . . . Therefore, watch!"

When the twelfth antiphony was intoned, Theodora drew a little slip of paper from the cover of her book of the "Holy Passion" and handed it to Miss Burney.

"I have translated this for you," she whispered; "it is so beautiful!" And the words of reproachful sadness echoed through the church.

"My people, what have I done to thee? I have cleansed thy lepers, I have raised up thy sick, I have given light to thy blind! My people, what have I done to thee, and how hast thou repaid me? Instead of manna, thou hast fed me with bitterness, instead of water, thou hast given me vinegar, and in place of thy love, a cross!"

After the fifth gospel came the solemn procession of the Cross round the church, and as the people fell apart to let it pass, and bowed themselves before it, the words of the Great Hymn of Holy Thursday, the hymn of contrasts, rose again and again as the deacons repeated it after the priests, and the choir after the deacons.

"To-day hangeth on wood He who hung the world in many waters; with false purple was He covered, He who covereth the sky with clouds; a crown of thorns was placed on the Head of the King of all angels. . . . " And then the thrice-repeated "We worship Thy Cross, O Christ! Show unto us Thy glorious Resurrection!"

After the Cross had been fixed in the middle of the great nave, and the sixth gospel had begun, many people left the church, but Theodora and Miss Burney stayed to the very end, until the last words of the twelfth gospel had been read, and the priest had pronounced the final benediction.

It was quite dark when they came down the broad steps of St. Irene, and Theodora hailed one of the victorias waiting outside. She gave the driver the address, and they both sank with relief on to the cushioned seats.

"I warned you that it would be long," said Theodora.

"Ah, but the music was beautiful; that 'Kyrie Eleison' will haunt me for days: I will come again with pleasure next year if you will take me."

"Very well," — and Theodora smiled. — "I will write

down the engagement in my little book, and write opposite, 'For Holy Thursday of 1909'!"

As they were crossing the Constitution Square, some one leaped up from a little table in front of Zacharatos's and hailed their carriage.

"My good ladies," he began in the usual beggar-whine, "for the benefit of your souls! Give a poor man . . . a lift!"

It was Nasso Lara, and they laughingly bade the driver let down the opposite seat. Nasso got in and sat down, gathering his long legs to one side so as not to be in their way.

"There 's a feather in my cap for Aunt Virginia," he said as they drove on; "I shall tell her how my keen eye saw you at once in the gathering dusk, and how I consequently got a lift for nothing, instead of taking a carriage to myself. It will show her how I have profited by her lessons on economy!"

"Will it not occur to her," asked Theodora, "that even if we had not happened to pass this way, there was another alternative — that of walking?"

"Oh, no," said Nasso promptly; "that would have made me late for dinner, and she hates that."

"Now," said Miss Burney, laughing, "don't ask him what he will answer when his aunt wonders why he could not have started a few moments earlier. Trust Nasso for finding a way to get round every one!"

"I shall answer the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," said Nasso with a grandiloquent air; "that I was waiting for Kontouli to see if he would take my service to-morrow on the ship."

"And can he?"

"Yes; at first he thought he could not manage it, and then he said that I had taken his turn for three days last year when he particularly wanted to go and meet some one — I 'm sure I don't remember it — and

that he would manage it somehow. You see," he added, "I want to be free to-morrow to keep Zoe a little brightened up. Good Friday is such a long, dreary day with the bells tolling ding-ding-ding every five minutes, especially if she has to spend it all with Aunt Virginia, and no chance of any one dropping in to interrupt their tête-à-tête. Do you know, except the years when I was away, we 've always spent Good Friday together, and always made chocolate in the afternoon over the stove in the old schoolroom; then in the evening I take her out to the Square to see the processions. I should have been really vexed if I had not been able to be free to-morrow; but it is extraordinary how lucky I am in most things! Always have been!"

"To which church are you going to-morrow, Theodora?" asked Miss Burney.

"To none. I am nurse to-morrow; I shall stay with Anthi, and let Vasiliki go to church."

"Miss Burney, what are you doing to-morrow afternoon?" asked Nasso suddenly.

"Nothing particular. I shall stay at home and mend, I think."

"Oh, Miss Burney, stay in rags a few days longer, do, and come and cook chocolate with us in the old schoolroom! It 'll make us feel so nice and young again."

"No," said Miss Burney decidedly; "I will do no such a thing. Why should an unattached body like myself always be clinging like a limpet to some one or something? Solitude is good for the soul, sometimes. This is an old custom specially belonging to the two of you. Why should I make a third?"

Nasso leaned forward in the carriage and imprisoned Miss Burney's hands in both of his. "Don't you know, then, that there is n't a custom so nice but that you can make it nicer? Don't you know that every one is jollier and happier and more 'comfortable' when you

are about? Even when we were small, and you *had* to make me learn things, did n't I watch for you at the windows? Do you think many lazy boys — and you can't say I was n't lazy — watch for their governesses and cry when they are ill? You 've just got to come! From to-morrow onward, Good Friday chocolate will be a custom belonging specially to the three of us. Miss Burney, 'darlint,' don't you know how very much we love you from the very bottom of our hearts, Zoe and I?" And stooping, he kissed her hands lightly before releasing them.

Miss Burney's eyes glistened in the light of the street lamps as she bent over and patted his shoulder. There 's no denying you 've got a way with you; you might have been born in the 'ould counthry.' I 'll come, my boy, I 'll come. Only mind, you tell Zoe it was all your doing!"

They were passing by the Laras's house and Nasso called out to the driver to stop. As he jumped out, he pulled his cap off and held out his hand to Theodora. "Thank you for the lift. Please tell Metro I 'm tired of always hearing him promise to come down to Salamis and have lunch on the ship with me. One of these days he is not to promise any more, but to do it. Give the angel-baby a special kiss from me, and a good Easter to you if I do not see you before Sunday!" As he swung back the big garden gates he called out: "Now, Miss Burney, 'Remember!' as your Cromwell or some one said when they cut his head off."

The carriage had started again when Miss Burney, making a trumpet of her two hands, called out to him: "Charles the First, you ignorant boy!"

"All right!" he shouted back; "any old king you like." And they heard him laughing in the distance.

When they reached home, Metro had not yet returned, and Anthi was in bed and asleep.

"And I did so want you to see her awake," said Theo-

dora in a disappointed voice. "When will the time come when she need not go to bed so early, and when she will run to the top of the stairs to look out for me, and to tell me all she has been doing? Don't you love the way children like to use the very longest words they can, and say them all wrong?"

"I do. But that 's a dreadfully bad habit you 're getting into, Theodora."

"I? What?"

"Of looking forward every bit of the time. If you want to get all the good you can out of life, you must learn to live in the present. You must, indeed. You must break yourself of the way of just enduring the present, while looking forward to some impossibly perfect future. It never will be perfect, you know. You must learn to make 'the unforgiving minute' give you its 'sixty seconds' worth' of sensation. 'T is not only the 'joy of destination' that 's everything, child; there 's 'the thrill of the journey' as well. Now, if you want to turn me out for a prosy, governessy old preacher, you can do it!"

Theodora bent down and kissed the little woman. "No, I 'll profit by your sermon instead. Now, come and see my bit of a child asleep."

CHAPTER XVII

On a spring day in Athens, stepping out on to a terrace in the early morning means literally stepping into a bath of blue light, and Theodora, as she unlatched the door that led out on to the flat roof of her house, closed her eyelids for a moment until her eyes got used to the brilliancy.

Then she opened them again and plunged her face into the soft little armful she carried, for she had brought her daughter with her to enjoy a few moments of her undivided company while Vasiliki was warming her milk.

She had a busy day before her, for it was the day they had fixed for their party, and in a household such as hers, that meant that most of the preparation would fall to her share.

"Anthi, my angel-baby, is n't it beautiful?"

It was beautiful. The pine-covered slopes of Mount Lycabettus looked as though they might be touched with an outstretched finger; light shadows of floating clouds were covering now one and now another peak of Hymettus, and there was a blue glimpse of sea in the far distance; but for all answer Anthi flung herself across her mother's shoulder, and seizing hold of a handful of loose hairs at the nape of her neck, pulled hard.

"Oh, my strong little bit of a child, how you hurt!" And Theodora gently loosened the grasp of the little fingers and began to walk from end to end of the flat roof. The movement satisfied Anthi, who laid her head against her mother's neck, curled up her little bare feet, and looked for a few moments as perfect a type of soft,

round, contented babyhood as any painter could have desired.

And Theodora looking down at her, Theodora who had never grown beyond the favorite habit of her childhood of making up long scenes and happenings, of fancying "what were fair in life" entirely free from the enslaving restraint of "providing it could be," began to imagine over again the scene she had rehearsed almost daily since the day her child had been born.

She imagined herself walking alone in a street or in a garden, — preferably a garden, — down a long avenue with Anthi lying just as she was now in her arms. It would be twilight, and vaguely in the distance she would distinguish a tall figure coming toward her; she would fancy it looked like her father, but she would not dare to be sure. Then little by little the upright carriage, the fine gray head, the firm, quick walk, the little swing of the cane, would become clearer and clearer. Would he stop? Would he look at her? And the pressure at her heart, the feeling as though a hand were gradually tightening over it, became at this point of the imagined scene absolute reality. Then a few paces only divided them — then fewer still — then he was before her; but the face was still averted; then slowly, very slowly, he would turn toward her, and she would see the long, slender hand stretch out and lay itself gently on the child's head, and then — it almost hurt to hear it again — the familiar voice with its deep, clear tone would ask: "Can this be the little daughter of my dear daughter?"

At this point she generally broke off her scene; the rest was one great blaze of joy; it could not be imagined in detail.

On this day, as it happened, she was interrupted by Vasiliki who called to her from the passage: "Kyria, if you like — the milk of the little one is ready."

So she stepped inside the house and gave up the child to the nurse, and passing through the hall went into the dining-room to see if the coffee was ready for Metro.

After breakfast he asked her whether she would mind unlocking the cabinet in his study and putting out the boxes of coins while he went to see Anthi.

"There is not much to do," he said; "I have only the last few to look over before I lock them up."

This was a private collection of Byzantine coins which a rich amateur of Alexandria had asked him to classify. So Theodora cleared the big writing table, the same Metro had always used in his old rooms behind the French School, and choosing from the pile of white cardboard boxes in the cabinet two red ones, she began picking out certain coins from them and placing them in two long lines, dividing them in fives, and sixes, and sevens.

Metro had early discovered that, owing to the enormous preponderance of Byzantine history in all its details over all other branches of her education, Theodora knew more of Byzantine coins and medals than many numismatologists.

She had pored with her father over so many Byzantine monographs and documents, she had become so familiar with their quaint Greek, which is neither classic nor modern, that her memory was a curious storehouse of the historical, imperial, literary, legal, and popular lore of the thousand and some years from 395 to 1453 A.D. that go to make up the Byzantine Empire.

She had even been able, once, to remind Metro, who had forgotten it, of the exact date when the last Latin inscription had appeared on a Byzantine coin at the beginning of the reign of Alexis Comnenus I, who ought, she insisted, to be considered as the first really Greek Emperor. Metro had said at the time that he was not quite convinced on this point, and would look up the question

again. "Though," he had added, "you know that I value your opinion."

From Metro, to whom in his youth women had been divided into two classes only, — good women and bad women, — and to whom the opinions of either class had been non-existent, this meant a great deal; to Theodora, accustomed to being consulted on international questions, it was a simple remark almost too obvious to have been worth making. However, she had answered gravely, "I am glad to be of use to you." Since then she had repeatedly helped him in his work and he had become accustomed to finding that what she did for him rarely if ever required correcting or doing again.

On this particular morning they filled the boxes, tied and sealed them, and when they were piled up on a chair, Theodora asked: "Are you going to send for them?"

"Yes. Yoryi will be here before eleven." Then, as they were both leaving the room, he asked: "Is there anything you want me to get for you when I go out?"

"No; everything is ordered."

"You are sure you will not tire yourself?"

"Yes; I promise I will not. Polymnia is coming this afternoon, to help me to cut sandwiches."

So all the morning, or most of it, she was busy arranging flowers, which in April in Greece is a pleasant task; for roses, especially the stiff-stemmed kind which are plentiful just then, arrange themselves, and require nothing but a guiding finger here and there.

Polymnia arrived about three in the afternoon, capable, deft-handed, practical, a very tower of strength in moments of housekeeping stress.

"Now, come," she said; "don't let us waste time in standing about and talking. With what do we begin?"

"Let us arrange the small cakes now, and then we can put the dishes at once in their places on the dining-room table."

"Where shall you dine to-night if you are arranging the table for the buffet from now? You had better come to us."

"No, thank you, Polymnia, I could not do that. I should be too nervous of what Triantafyllia might see fit to do or to leave undone in my absence. She can serve us on the table in the hall. There won't be much to serve. Only some cold keftedes left over from luncheon. Aglaia is far too busy with her chocolate and lemonade for this evening, to have time for any cooking."

"Well, you stop at home if you must, and send Metro to us."

"Thank you, Polymnia, I will tell him, of course; but I do not think he will come without me."

"But why on earth should n't he? Men generally are only too glad to rush away from a fuss. I am sure Nico always is when I have anything on hand; even in India, where housekeeping is so easy and the khitmutgar sees to nearly everything for you, he always used to escape on the day of a dinner party."

And it suddenly came home to Theodora, that whatever men in general did, her particular man's very last thought would be to rush off in search of comfort or ease for himself, if by staying at home he could in the slightest way lessen her tasks for her, or be of any use: even were it only to be on the spot to make her stop working when she began to look tired.

This man of the people knew instinctively how to minister to all her wants, spoken or even unspoken, and his ministrations were entirely devoid of fuss. It was strange how very soon this had come to seem quite natural to her; just as natural and as obvious as it had been to be always ready to serve her father when she had lived with him. Certainly the latter's acknowledgment had always been prompt and graceful, almost deprecating. "You spoil me, my dear daughter!" But

nevertheless the service, whatever toil or sacrifice it might entail, was invariably accepted. Whereas, if by any chance she served her husband in any way, he would frown a little, flush a dark red, and protest in a low, hurried voice, "You! Oh, no, no!" And yet Metro was most certainly accustomed to the idea of the wife serving "her man."

Most certainly his mother had served and fetched and carried for his father; most certainly so had he seen all good housewives do, when he was a child in Poros. But this was not just "his wife," it was "Theodora!"

"No," she repeated slowly, "I am quite sure he will not come."

"Well, at any rate, mind you tell him!" said her cousin.

Polymnia was a wonderfully quick worker. When everything was ready, she went to wash her hands and put on her hat. She was absent for some little time.

As she opened the hall door to leave she turned back for a moment. "By the way," she remarked casually, "you 'll find a potato salad in the kitchen. Aglaia had some cold potatoes and I mixed it just now when I went to wash my hands. Tell Metro it is a first-class Indian recipe, and I made it because I know cold keftedes are very dry things all by themselves, and if he likes it I 'll give you the recipe. That 's all right, you need not thank me. I did n't make it for you. Au revoir, go and lie down a bit. There 's nothing much left to do, and we 'll be here at nine exactly, before any one else."

Monsieur Arnoux had also promised to be among the first arrivals that evening, but he had been delayed by a young student who, just as the old man was coming down the stairs fully dressed, had come to ask him the date of certain minor excavations absolutely necessary for next morning's lesson. So Monsieur Arnoux patiently went back into his study, relighted the lamp, looked

among his papers for the required information, noted it carefully on a loose leaf of paper, and accompanied his untimely visitor down again, answering all his excuses with "But not at all, my young friend, not at all! When I can be of some use I am always at your service." So that it was nearly ten o'clock when he arrived at Metro's, and most of the guests had finished tea and were back in the hall and sitting room.

He spoke to Metro and Professor Manelli, who were standing near the entrance, and made his way slowly toward Theodora. Young Tassiades and Solon Vanos were talking to her and Monsieur Arnoux watched the way in which she kept up the conversation with them and yet was always ready to welcome late-comers with the very words that best suited each one, and the smile that never grew vague or fixed.

Though there was not the shadow of a physical resemblance to his mother, who had been a fair little woman, still at that moment something in Theodora vaguely reminded him of her, and he recognized that it was the same indescribable air of complete ease and self-possession, that instinctive reliance on one's own powers which is the inheritance from a long line of ancestors who, whatever their fate or their character, have always been sure of their position in the eyes of the world.

When he came up to her she interrupted her conversation to give him her hand and to present young Tassiades to him.

"Ever since Sunday," she told him, "Anthi has refused to go to sleep without the Easter egg you gave her tightly clasped in her arms," and, turning to the young men and to Andriotti who had just joined them she added, "I dread to think of the terrible way in which Monsieur Arnoux will spoil my daughter later on, since he has begun from now."

"How old is mademoiselle?" asked Solon Vanos.

"Eight months old," answered Andriotti. "May I," he added, turning to Theodora, "present her to these gentlemen?" And from a little table beside him, he lifted a snap-shot of Anthi in a small leather frame.

"How unkind of you!" said Theodora. "What do you expect the poor men to say? If at least they were married men, and had any experience; but all babies are the same at that age to outsiders."

"Excuse me," said Andriotti, "I am an unmarried man myself, and agree as to the general rule, but this is the exception. There are, you must know," he said, turning to the young men, as though delivering a lecture, "fat babies and thin babies; big babies and small babies; smiling babies and squealing babies; even, though you may find it hard to believe, there are pretty babies and ugly babies; and then there is — Anthi, whom I here present to you in the act of swallowing her shoe; she has a category all to herself."

While the men were laughing and passing the photograph from hand to hand, Monsieur Arnoux looked round the room. He saw bridge tables already occupied, through the open door leading to the dining room; he saw Dr. Paschali peering in his short-sighted way at the titles of all the books in the bookcase within his range of vision; he saw the doctor's wife resplendent in a strawberry-colored silk dress, with her hair waved in the latest way, gesticulating as she talked to Marco Delamana; he heard her plaintively yet very audibly asserting, as though deploring some natural and absolutely irremediable defect: "I have no patience with children, you know. Is it not a pity?" He saw Nasso Lara, in the wonderfully becoming naval evening dress uniform, bending over Miss Burney, who was stifling her laughter with one hand at her mouth, and with the other motioning to him to stop. He heard Professor Manelli in eager discussion on the "language" question

with Vanoussaki, the journalist; he saw Metro talking to Adelina Dandolo, Petro's pretty fair-haired sister; and then he heard Zoe's sudden amused laugh and turned to watch her, as she talked first to one and then to another, a little flushed, a little excited, her figure, in a white dress, looking pretty and slim and straight, until, as she moved to another group, the limp became so painfully evident.

Petro Dandolo was just asking Theodora whether she had liked a book he had lent her a little while before.

"I am curious to know," he said, "because it is a book about which there are so many contrary opinions."

"'Liked it' is not the term I can use," said Theodora; "it gave me a shock of gladness, if one may use the two words together; then I read it a second time, and again a third time, and found myself more under the power of its charm each time."

"Ah," said Dandolo, "you too?"

"What book is that?" asked Vanoussaki.

"'De l'obscurité à la lumiére,' by Olivier Belmorin."

"I read it," said Andriotti, "when it first came out some six months ago. It is delightfully written, but I confess I prefer the more realistic school; it is a little too sentimental for my taste."

"That may be an added reason why I like it," said Theodora, "being distinctly inclined to be sentimental myself."

"Oh, no, my dear lady!" protested Andriotti; "you surely do not call yourself sentimental."

"I do," answered Theodora, rather hotly; "in the original sense of the word, and I am grateful for being so. I hate the affectation of despising anything romantic or sentimental — this new fashion, which has made the very words ridiculous. According to all who are ashamed of being thought so, the only real things in life are the ugly ones. A vivid account of a brutal murder; a picture

of pigs rooting in a dung-heap; a detailed description of some disgusting malady, or the loves of an alcoholic criminal and a neuropathic degenerate, that is realism, of course! That you can admire openly as a bit of actual life with no pretense or 'sickly sentiment' about it! But a glorious sunset, the love-story of two people who happen — and it does sometimes — to be young, healthy, and handsome; a great deed of heroism, or of rare generosity, or of forgiveness, — that, of course, is sheer sentimentality. Oh, don't talk to me! I am sick of it! As if every single splendid and noble and beautiful thing that ever was seen, or heard, or sung, or died for, does not appeal and rise from sentiment, sentiment, sentiment!"

"Well said!" applauded Vanoussaki; "and with your permission I shall embody it in my next Monday's article, and call it 'Pseudo-realism.'"

"As the Latins say," murmured Andriotti, "Verba volant, scripta manent."

"It depends on what kind of 'scripta,'" laughed Vanoussaki; "I am afraid I cannot flatter myself that my Monday articles will go down to posterity; unless an appreciative public presses me to republish them in book form, and I have seen no signs of such a desire as yet."

"Ah, we must not talk any more, Lara is going to sing."

Every one tried to get as near the piano as he could; even the bridge-players in the dining room left their game and stood in the doorway. Nasso sang the new song of Tosti's which he had promised Theodora, he sang the "Ideale" of the same composer, and he sang the serenade from the "Roi d'Ys."

"That is all I have with me," he said when the applause had died away; "and I am sure the bridge-players at least will not be sorry."

There were vigorous protests, and he was begged for just one more.

"Surely there is something you can sing without music."

"No, I really cannot. It is awfully stupid of me, but I never can remember a lot of words by heart; the only thing that has stuck in my memory is the 'Salut demeure chaste et pure!' from 'Faust,' perhaps because my old French nurse used to sing it, and I 'm sure you don't want to hear that."

"No, no!" agreed Zoe, Andriotti, and Dandolo, in chorus.

"Well," conceded Miss Burney; "one certainly has heard a little too much of 'Faust' here in Athens; every traveling opera company has given it for the past thirty years."

"Oh, Miss Burney!" cried Nasso; "but *you* ought not to complain of that. It 's most unpatriotic of you! You should stick up for your own countrymen!"

"My own countrymen — ?"

"Yes, Shakespeare, of course. Was n't it he who wrote 'Faust'? I don't mean the music, of course," he added hastily, seeing the look of blank astonishment on all the faces around him; "I mean the original play, poem, drama, whatever you call the thing!"

Theodora went off into a fit of laughter. "Shakespeare! Oh, Nasso!"

"Why," gasped Nasso, "I always thought that he had written all those mysterious sorts of problem plays in the Middle Ages, 'Hamlet' and 'Faust,' and all that kind of thing."

"Just listen to him!" sighed Miss Burney; "what is one to do with the boy?"

"Nothing!" pronounced Zoe, closing the piano; "I have striven from my earliest youth to educate and elevate his mind — and now you see! 'Faust'! Shakespeare! and the 'problem plays' of the Middle Ages! I remember poor old Professor Vrassides who gave us

Greek lessons; whenever Nasso had been extra trying, he used to pat his head before going away, and say sadly, 'Good-bye, little hollowhead! Good-bye!' and then he would quote that one of Æsop's fables, you know, which ends with 'What a beautiful head! but it has no brains!' Oh, Nasso! Nasso! You have disgraced Miss Burney and me beyond redemption."

Smaragda Paschali, whom a certain kind of joke always left quite serious, happened to be standing next to Monsieur Arnoux and turned to him.

"Really they are making a great fuss over a little mistake. Can one carry all the different plays and authors in one's brain? Besides, when a man is as handsome as young Lara, and such a splendid officer, and such a lover of sport also, you cannot expect him to be a philosopher as well!"

"Why not, madame?" asked the old Frenchman.

"Oh, because the same person cannot have everything, and besides, he would not have the time to study."

"And yet your ancestors succeeded in finding it."

"How do you mean?"

"Was not Sophocles chosen to represent 'Youth' at the commemorative festival of Salamis, as being the finest and best developed young man of his day? And did not Æschylus find time in his lost moments to be an excellent boxer? Was not Aristotle a man of prodigious strength? Was not the legendary 'strong man' — Milo of Croton, he who could carry a bull on his shoulders — one of Pythagoras's best disciples?"

"Yes, yes, of course," answered Smaragda Paschali hurriedly; "but I 'm sure I don't know how they managed all those things; perhaps their days were longer in the ancient times."

Monsieur Arnoux looked slightly bewildered. "The days — " he began.

But Zoe, who had overheard the last sentences, limped forward.

"My dear Kyria Paschali," she said suavely, "why do you not crush your opponent with what the great philosopher Minoparis himself said in the Agora: 'Let the philosopher stick to his papyrus, and the discobolus to — to — his disc.'"

"Of course," said Smaragda Paschali triumphantly; "I was just going to quote it when you came up; of course, monsieur; you see Mino — Minoparis said it himself, that every one should keep to his own specialty. Now, what can you answer to that?"

A slow smile lit up the old man's face. "Nothing, of course, madame; I have nothing to oppose to the great philosopher 'Minoparis'!"

At this moment Smaragda Paschali was loudly and repeatedly called; the poker table was quite ready, and the players were waiting to draw for places.

As she hurried forward, Theodora, who had overheard the little scene, caught hold of Zoe's arm, and shook her.

"You wicked girl! And in my house too! And if Monsieur Arnoux had not played up to you — ? What if you had been asked where and when the great philosopher 'Minoparis' had flourished?"

"My dear Theodora! I am astounded at your ignorance! — shocked! horrified! Minoparis, of course, was born toward the end of the — of the thirty-third Olympiad — in Ægina. His sponsors were Minos, the King of Crete, and Paris, the son of Priam — hence his name!"

CHAPTER XVIII

THERE had been no rain in Athens since Easter; now and then a high wind blew over the city, but it was a hot one and clouds of dust rose and settled in the streets, turning everything, green trees, red tiles, brown earth, and blue sky, into one uniform, thick, dull gray.

The Laras had left for Switzerland, Professor Manelli, with Polymnia and the little girls, were leaving for Vichy by the next steamer. Nasso was away on a training trip, in charge of the last class of naval cadets. Even Miss Burney had taken a summer engagement at Therapia, and wrote enthusiastic letters about the beauty and the cool air of the Bosphorus.

Theodora stood by the window in the sitting room, and looked down through the slats of the closed shutters into the hot street. It was bathed in blazing sunlight, thick with dust, and empty save for a patient, fruit-laden donkey standing before the corner grocery, and attempting in vain, by the constant flicking of his tail, to chase away the swarms of flies which surrounded him. The house next door, which Theodora had often envied, was rich in the possession of a little garden which in May had been one lovely mass of Banksia roses; but they were all faded now, and the pink oleanders which had replaced them were gray with dust. The little terrace was being swept, and having its tiles polished, for the lucky owners had long since taken to dining out of doors in the evenings.

When the heat had first begun and Metro had regretted that their balcony was too small to hold a table and two chairs, Theodora had been secretly pleased, because the idea of dining in semi-publicity over a street crowded

in the evening hours with frowsy women sitting on their doorsteps, and with bands of screaming children, had been most disagreeable to her. Of late, however, she had come to regret it also; what did the crowded street matter, if only they could have some air? The little dining room, on whose windows the sun beat all the afternoon, was stifling. She had even measured the strip of balcony to see if the smallest table in the house would fit on. But the balcony was too narrow; two chairs could be got into it only with difficulty, and even these grated against the railing with every movement.

Theodora looked back into the darkened room: it was littered with books, magazines, old albums, and bundles of loose engravings, and Triantafyllia on her knees was vigorously wiping the empty shelves of the bookcase with a damp cloth. Theodora had got up very early — it was too hot to stay in bed a moment after awaking — and had attempted to fill in the long morning hours by turning out her books. She had been interrupted by the return of little Anthi from her early morning outing, all her soft brown hair clinging in moist rings to the little head. She was paler than she had been in the spring, but as lively and as ready to fling herself into her mother's arms as ever. She was asleep now, and Theodora was waiting for the shelves to be cleaned before resuming her task. She wiped her hot face and leaned it against the open pane of glass in the vain hope of finding it cool to her cheek.

"There, Kyria, they are all dusted, the shelves."

"Thank you," said Theodora listlessly, turning round.

"It is nothing," answered Triantafyllia almost before the words had left her mistress's lips.

This invariable reply irritated Theodora so unreasonably that she was sometimes tempted to omit the ordinary courtesy of thanking, in order to avoid hearing it. She sat down on a low chair near the empty bookcase, and

tried to arrange her books, but the interest had gone from the task. She was tired, without knowing why.

She suddenly decided to brave the heat and go out. The child's nurse absolutely required a new dress, and there was no fruit for luncheon. She could buy the print for the dress, and get some fruit on her way back. Instead of ringing the bell she called to the maid, whom she could hear moving about in the dining room.

"Triantafyllia, I am going out. Put all these books back, please. See! each row is separate on the floor, under its own shelf; you cannot make a mistake, if you take care not to mix them."

Triantafyllia threw up her arms and exclaimed: "Going out? In this sun-blaze! But it is madness! What will the master say?"

Theodora drew herself up slightly. "Go and put out my brown dress, if you please, and my hat with the white wing, and then come and put these books on their shelves as I told you."

Triantafyllia went; but as she left the room she muttered with various clickings of tongue and shakings of head: "Certainly it is madness! How should these foreign brought-up ladies know the country better than we do?"

When Theodora shut the outer door and stood on the scorching pavement, she instinctively closed her eyelids against the terrible glare, and had it not been for Triantafyllia she would probably have reëntered the house, but as it was, she quickly opened her big white parasol and with half-closed eyes and bent head made for the turning of the Kiphissia Road. She walked fast the sooner to reach the strip of shadow under the larger houses; but the sunlight still lay in dazzling patches of gold on the thick dust of the road, and the white marble of the houses glared and flickered.

As she went on down the Kiphissia Road, where in winter and spring every second or third passer-by was

generally an acquaintance, she did not see a single familiar face with the exception of Leonidas of the twisted mouth, who made her a deep yet astonished obeisance in return for the copper which she offered him. It was evidently against all his preconceived notions of what was proper and fitting that she should be in Athens at that season, and still more that she should be out of doors at that hour.

She passed in front of the Grande Bretagne, and avoiding the burning, blinding expanse of the open Square, passed by the Street of the Muses to the narrow back ways of the smaller shops where a little shadow might possibly be found. There were more people there than in the better thoroughfares at this hour, and Theodora, searching for a shop where she had been told the prints and linens were particularly cheap, pushed her way once or twice, a little impatiently, through lounging groups of hot, unshaven, and shabby-looking men. It struck her, as she glanced at one of them, how very badly, as a rule, men dressed in Greece, almost as badly as the women, on the other hand, dressed well, and in excellent taste; and her thoughts flew back to her father, always so perfectly dressed, so well groomed, so elegant in his sober, well-cut clothes, so cool and immaculate-looking in the hottest summer weather in his light grays, and whites, and Panama hats. She half closed her eyes and placed him in fancy on the beach at Ostend or in the park at Luchon, and then her thoughts came back in a rush to the pavements, gritty with dust, under her feet and to the rubbish in the gutters beside her, and she became vividly conscious of every jarring noise, of every flying bit of dirty newspaper, of every disagreeable smell of the stiflingly hot city.

And she told herself in despair that it was early in July yet! At least three months before she might hope for cool weather. She felt at that moment, as she had never felt before, that neither Anthi, nor she herself

could bear it; that something must be done. But what? The prices of the Kiphissia and Phaleron hotels were out of the question for them; Metro had, indeed, when the heat first began, spoken of Poros, for, besides the somewhat cooler atmosphere and the sea air, he had told Theodora more than once that he was anxious, before Kyra Sophoula died, to give her the joy of holding his child in her arms; and Theodora had agreed heartily — for the old woman had never seen the child, nor even its mother. When the wedding took place it had been arranged then that she should come to Athens to be present at the ceremony, but a violent attack of rheumatism had prevented her.

But Metro had found the plan most difficult to arrange. Where could they stay? The idea of the hotel was most repugnant to him. Two or three rooms might at a stretch have been prepared and cleaned up and scoured for them, but he knew Theodora's daintiness of ways and habits, and he also knew that at this hot season no amount of scrubbing would clear the rooms of undesirable insects, to say nothing of the absolute lack of privacy and the well-meant but most annoying general interest which would be aroused by the fact of Metro's — Anthi's Metro's! — wife and child staying at Kyr Charalambo's hotel. No! It was impossible!

Theodora found her shop and bought her print; then she came out into the narrow Street of Hermes which was built for the tiny Athens of King Otho's time, and had even been called in those days "The Great Street," crossed it, and waited under the shadow of the Metropolis Cathedral for the number 15 tram-car which would take her back to her neighborhood.

As she stepped into the crowded car the clock above her struck the half after eleven, and she felt pleased that the morning was nearly at an end. At least the

afternoon brought rest and sleep and the evening a little comparative coolness. At the Kolonaki Square she stopped at a little greengrocer's stall where strings of Ægina water pitchers for sale hung in garlands before the opening. It was a very small fruit stall, and did not cater for very particular customers. The peaches were all hard and unripe; the apricots too ripe; a few strawberries on a vine leaf did not look very fresh.

"Have you no better ones?"

"These are quite good, Kyria, from Kiphissia this morning; and they are the last ones, too; to-morrow there will be none."

She decided to take them, but looked at her gloves doubtfully.

"Can you wrap them up in many papers?"

"Surely, Kyria, in two bags." Then, meaning only to be pleasant, he added, "Truly it would be a sin to soil those little white gloves!"

Theodora frowned a little, alike at the familiarity of the remark, and because, she told herself, that she wanted to be able to spoil three pairs of white gloves a day if she felt like it.

When she got home she gave the strawberries to Triantafyllia, told her to take them carefully out of the bag, throw away the bruised ones, and put the others in a glass dish; but with these precautions she felt that the fruit would lose its savor. She wanted never to see strawberries in a paper bag at all, but to find them ready arranged with green leaves, or maidenhair ferns, as Justin used to arrange them on small crystal plates, or on a fruit dish of Viennese china.

When Metro came home at noon he carried a little flat paper parcel which he gave into Theodora's hands as she came out from behind the blue curtain on hearing his step.

"Tell Triantafyllia to put it on the table."

"What is it?"

"Only a little caviar."

"Caviar! Oh, Metro! It is so dear!"

"It is to give you an appetite. You eat so little lately!"

"Who can eat in this weather?" she said. Then she added hurriedly, "But one can always eat caviar, certainly; thank you, Metro."

"You have been out!" he asked in an astonished voice, seeing her gloves and parasol on the hall table.

"Yes, I went to buy a dress for Vasiliki, and a little fruit."

"But, my child, in this sun-blaze! It is madness!"

This repetition of Triantafyllia's sentence annoyed Theodora. "It is quite as hot indoors."

After luncheon Metro took his coffee in the sitting room alone, and when he came into their bedroom with the last number of the "Revue Numismatique" in his hand, he found Theodora, in a thin, white dressing-gown, lying on her bed.

He came near her and stood over her. "What shall you do in the afternoon?"

"What is there to do?"

"I mean, shall you see any one? Are none of your friends coming here?"

"My dear Metro, who is there in Athens to come?"

"I thought perhaps your cousin, or the little girls — "

"Ah, it is true they will be here four days longer; but they are far too busy preparing to start. However, perhaps I may go there late in the afternoon, Polymnia may want some help."

"Shall we go out together? I have to meet Andriotti at the office of the Hestia, at six o'clock, and I could leave you at your uncle's first."

"If you like; why not?" Then after a pause she asked, "Is it quite settled that Andriotti is to be one of the new deputies?"

"He is going to try; yes; they have persuaded him to put up a ballot-box."

"Are his chances of election good?"

"No one can be sure about a first attempt in politics, but we all hope so. If he is elected, I think he will go far."

"He certainly speaks very well." And Theodora pulled her pillow from under her head, turning it so as to get the cooler linen to her cheek.

"Will you not have something over your feet; your bed is right in the draught between the door and the window."

"You have kept all the — the genuine Greek's horror of a draught! I only wish there were one!"

She lay with her eyes half closed, and Metro made a movement as though to bend over her, and then straightened himself up again.

"Very well, my child. Try not to think of the heat, and sleep!"

And Theodora threw her right arm over her head as she had done ever since she was a tiny child, and slept.

Metro sat on the armchair by the closely shuttered window. His review was on his knees, but he did not open it.

When they left the house together at a little before six o'clock, it was not yet cool, and Metro suggested waiting for the tram-car which was due in a few moments.

"It is sure to be full at this hour," said Theodora.

"Still, we might wait and see."

"As you like." And they waited on the pavement opposite the little Church of St. Nicholas.

At the corner outside the walled enclosure there stands a little stone column, containing a padlocked money-box, to receive offerings for the needs of the church, and above it a small icon of St. Nicholas let into the stone.

A woman in a tight-fitting, mauve foulard dress, and a hat with mauve feathers, stopped in front of this little pillar, dropped a coin into the box, crossed herself devoutly, and bent to kiss the icon. She crossed over to where the Philippides were standing and went on, up the Kiphissia Road.

When she was out of hearing, Metro said: "Did you not think that lady was a little like Smaragda Paschali?"

"That lady!" repeated Theodora; "can you not tell a lady by sight?"

Metro frowned slightly. "Her dress was ugly; but otherwise, how should I know?"

"Well, I could see three good reasons why she should be nothing of the kind."

"What reasons?"

"First of all, she rustled as she walked, and ladies do not rustle nowadays; secondly, she held herself as though unaccustomed to her clothes, as though they were what my old English nurse used to call her 'best Sunday things,' and thirdly, did you not notice her at the little icon?"

But here Metro rebelled. "That is not a reason. May not a lady even of the best world have kept her faith?"

"She may have kept enough to move a mountain," said Theodora; "but she will not advertise it by bending low and making the sign of the cross at a street corner, nor will she put her lips to a dirty glass that all sorts of people may have kissed!"

The tram-car came up at this moment, and by good chance there were two seats free at the back. Metro let down the big glass window which some one had pulled up and made Theodora sit next to it.

"Now with the rush of the car you will get a little air."

"Thank you; but you — ?"

"I am all right here; besides, I do not feel the heat as you do; I am acclimated."

She sat down obediently and turned her face to meet the breeze.

Metro looked at her as she sat beside him, her hands lying loosely on her lap. He thought for the thousandth time that he had never seen a woman look so exactly right as she always did. And yet what she was wearing at the time was simple enough. A white dress of a soft, towel-like material, a straw hat of natural color with a white wing, and a white lace veil covering nearly all the hair. She made all the other women in the car look overdressed or underdressed. The way the veil rested on the hat and met behind, hiding all but the hair at the nape of the neck, was just right, and yet Metro knew that she had tied it on without even a looking-glass, but had just patted it into shape; her long gloves fell into just the right wrinkles over her arms, and the brown shoes had taken the shape of the long, slim feet, and were neither too old nor too new. She was rather pale with the heat of the last months, and perhaps scarcely ever, except under the most favorable circumstances, would one exclaim of her, "What a lovely woman!" but even under the most unfavorable ones very few would not stop to ask, "Who is that woman?"

As the tram-car turned the corner by the Ministry of War, she turned her face from the window and said in a low voice: "Metro, I was cross and disagreeable just now about that woman at the corner, and all afternoon, and all these days I know I have been irritable. Don't be vexed with me; I think it is the heat."

When Metro answered, his voice was a little husky: "You must not say such things! Are we to count our words now, you and I? If only I could make it less hot for you!"

"Never mind!" she said, smiling at him.

They got down at the corner of her uncle's street and parted, she going up toward the house, and he crossing over by the University to the more central quarter of the newspaper offices.

When about two hours later Theodora left the Manellis' house, her eyes were very bright and there were the traces of a recent smile still on her lips. She walked fast and pushed up her veil to feel the evening breeze on her face. She went down the street which is called after Sina, having the Academy on her right.

The statues and palms of the garden stood out against a crimson horizon line, and overhead little rose-golden clouds floated about in the palest of green skies. The indescribable purity of the tint struck Theodora like a perfect note in a song.

An empty, one-horse carriage was leisurely mounting the University Avenue. She signed to the driver and when he approached the curbstone, she got into the carriage and gave him her address. But he had scarcely started when she stopped him.

Up one of the pavements of the wide street of Koraë a man with bent head was walking slowly.

"Metro!" she cried, when he was within hailing distance; "Metro! It is I. Come with me!"

He started, lifted his head, and, seeing her, quickened his pace until he came up to her, and sprang in.

"I took a carriage," she said, a little breathlessly, as the horse started "klip-klopping" regularly up the broad avenue, "because — "

Metro laid his hand on hers in the gathering dusk. "There is no 'because.' You were tired and you took a carriage; you did perfectly right."

"No, I was not tired at all; I wanted to get to you a moment earlier."

Metro's grasp tightened a little. "You wanted — "

"Yes, I have something to tell you."

"Ah — " Then, after a second's pause, "What is it?"

"Metro, you know how you wanted, how we both wanted, to go to Poros for a change?"

"Yes, of course; but — "

"Well; shall we go?" And she turned in the carriage so as to face him, and he could see that her eyes were shining.

"But, my child — "

"Metro, listen! You know I told you how I went once with Costa, to stay with some friends of my aunt's in Poros; well, these people are away now traveling, and it seems my uncle wrote to them some time ago, because he found I looked pale and the child also, and to-day — now — he has just received a letter from them to say that their house is absolutely at the disposal of his niece, or of any member of his family who might require it. Oh, Metro, you know which I mean; the Red House on the hill; we can go now, can we not?"

"The Red House on the hill!" echoed Metro, and his hands dropped on his knees and he looked out into the fast-gathering darkness, as though at a vision.

"The Red House on the hill!" If the King had kindly lent Metro his palace and if he were just contemplating moving into it with his family, there could not possibly have been more awe in his voice. For the "Red House on the hill" in Poros represented the first glimpse he had ever had of any manner of living beyond that of the huts and cottages of the village.

The inhabitants of the Red House had been the first people of gentle birth whom he had ever seen. From the time when as a little lad of seven he had followed Kyra Sophoula up the hills to gather herbs and simples and had seen the chimneys of the Red House among the pines, smoking at all hours of the day, to the time when as an older lad he had carried eggs with Maroussa

to the back door, the Red House, and those who lived in it, had always been a dream of wonder to him.

The first instrumental music which he had ever heard were snatches of piano music which came to him from the open windows of the Red House on summer nights as he passed spear-fishing in a boat under the terrace walls; the first pictures he had ever seen had been those in the old illustrated papers which one of the boys of the Red House had given him, when Kyra Sophoula had sent him there with some chickens for sale, and it was then, too, that standing outside the open window of a room on the ground-floor he had caught his first glimpse of a bookcase, and had turned almost sick with envy at the sight of the rows upon rows of books it contained. Since then he had seen far larger libraries, and far larger and finer houses, he had associated daily with people of the same class as those who lived in the Red House, — his own wife's birth was probably superior to that of any one else in Greece, — but the name of the "Red House on the hill" had not lost its ancient magic.

As for Theodora, she also was seeing visions of a little green island, of a bright, roomy house on a sloping hill with its pine woods over a blue, blue sea; of white and red-sailed boats; of sunbeams glittering on moving ripples; and through the varied odors and noises of the city streets she fancied she already felt the sweet breath of the thyme-grown hills, and heard the liquid tinkle of the sheep bells, and the wind singing in the pine branches.

Metro turned to her. "But how shall we go?"

"There is a widow who keeps the house."

"Yes," said Metro; "I know her."

"Well, my uncle gave me her name; now, to-night after dinner we will go out together and send her a telegram, then we will go to my uncle's and say good-bye to them; for they leave on Sunday."

"And we, my wife, when do we leave?"

"We? By to-morrow's steamer, of course; the afternoon one. We shall arrive in Poros about seven, shall we not?"

"Yes," said Metro with a deep sigh of content; "a little before sunset."

CHAPTER XIX

UNDER a vine-covered pergola on the terrace, Theodora and Metro were taking their morning coffee.

The terrace, raised high above the level of the sea, formed a plateau on which the house stood. A house of reddish color, paled by many years of sea and sun into a dull Venetian pink, with luxuriant bougainvillæa and wisteria climbing up to the roof.

Theodora lifted her cup to her lips, but the movement had been unconscious and she put it down again untasted. Her eyes were fixed on the outward sweep of the stone terrace as it dipped down into the sea, and on the flight of broad steps which led from it to the tiny landing-stage below. The ruby red of the geraniums in the stone vases against the shimmering blue of the water and the distant, soft green of the opposite hills made a blending of color that was a feast for eyes tired by the white glare of Athenian streets.

"Metro," said Theodora suddenly, "if you know how to listen, you will hear that corner of the terrace, that one just there in the sunlight with the red sail in the distance, crying out for a painter to come and paint it! Hark! Can you not hear it?"

Metro, who was peeling a purple fig, looked up with questioning eyes. "Hear it? Yes," he said slowly; "you are right. If only some good painters would come here, many more people would see the beauty of our land."

Then he got up and came beside Theodora where she sat in a wicker chair, in a transparent, white dressing-gown.

"Some day," he said, "when we have much money — no, I do not quite know yet how we shall get it — perhaps I may write a book — who can tell? — then I will build you a house like this, only, instead of these purple flowers, it will be all over roses; it shall have a terrace like this one over the sea, but it shall have marble seats and a fountain; and we will have Androutsos to come and paint a picture of it."

It was not very like Metro to make future plans.

Theodora looked up, pleased and smiling. "Will Anthi be in the picture?" she asked.

"But of course; she must lie quite naked on a rug, that must have some yellow and some blue in its colors, and she will stretch out her little hands to catch some pigeons which will be walking round her."

There was a flutter of wings over their heads and a large white pigeon rose heavily and settled among the vine leaves on the pergola. As Theodora looked up, Metro stooped suddenly and pressed his lips into the little hollow at the base of her throat, and as she gave a little, laughing cry, tickled by the soft mustache under her chin, and raised her hands to push away his head, he put the fig he had just peeled to her mouth, using the turned back skin as a handle.

Just then came a sound of heavy footsteps, and two voices talking together. The one was saying in a drawling sing-song: "Now the little golden child smells the lovely little flowers."

And the other voice was punctuating each word by shrill little syllables: "Da . . . da! Ba . . . ba!"

And little Anthi, borne in the stout, solid arms of her handmaid Vasiliki, came round the corner of the terrace. Both little hands were tightly clasping bunches of stalkless scarlet geraniums, and there were pink stains all over the tiny fingers.

Vasiliki stopped her monologue and relapsed into

ordinary speech. "You will not believe me, Kyria, but if it be not true, may you never call me Vasiliki again. This child, now that we were passing by the big vase over there, made a big plunge and seized all these flowers with her own little hands. See! You cannot open her fingers, so tightly does she hold them! And all the time she has been smelling them like a grown person. Show baba and mamma how you can smell the flowers, my little bird!"

And Anthi, whether obediently or by coincidence, raised both hands to her nose and sniffed lengthily.

Theodora rushed forward and caught her, flowers and all. "My clever little bit of a child! Come and let mamma smell the flowers!"

Vasiliki straightened down her crumpled apron, and addressed herself to Metro. "Already yesterday, Kyrie, she kept smelling the flowers which I picked for her, and when that — old — old lady — "

"Do you mean Kyra Sophoula?"

"Yes; Kyra Sophoula took her, and she put the flowers to the — the old lady's nose, and sniffed."

For Kyra Sophoula had held Metro's child in her arms, and had blessed her, and had rejoiced over her, and had wondered at the intelligence, and strength, and sweetness, such as no other child, scarce out of swaddling clothes, had surely ever shown.

The very first day on which they had arrived in Poros, Metro had sent the boat from the Red House with the simple message to Kyra Sophoula that the widow woman who lived there and kept it wanted her. He had thought better that the first meeting should take place there, for he knew his island well, and was positive that had he and his wife gone first to the old woman's house beyond the dark Arch, the whole village would have formed an accompanying procession after them. He was sure also that this simple message would bring Kyra

Sophoula at once; when had she ever failed to answer the call of any friend or neighbor in need — nay, of any enemy even?

So when the little rowboat had returned, and the bent old woman, with the white kerchief over the wrinkled brown face, stepped on to the landing-stage in the afterglow of the sunset, and began climbing the broad stone steps, instead of the widowed caretaker whom she expected to see, she found Metro before her! — Metro, her boy! — and beside him the lady, his wife! And Theodora, with the most natural and graceful of gestures, had bent low and kissed the hardened, toil-worn hand, and poor old Kyra Sophoula had been so overcome and confused that she could not speak a word, and only when the little child had been brought and put into her shaking arms had she lifted swimming eyes to the two who stood above her, and murmured: "May it live to us, my little bird! God make its years many and give it a golden Fate!"

They had kept her with them all that evening, and she had sat at table with them, and Metro's lady-wife had insisted on serving her first of all; her, Kyra Sophoula! the old herb-woman! But she had been too happy to eat or drink; and afterwards she had seen the little child asleep in a cot all muslin and lace, and Theodora had sat beside her and asked her many questions about Metro when he had been a little lad, and what he had said, and what he had done.

Later, when Metro took her down the long flight of steps to the rowboat, she had said to him: "Metro, my lad, may the Holy Virgin stretch out her hand over your child and your wife. She has a beautiful face, though there is sorrow in her face which should not be there. But I must tell you that they have spoken evil of her, here in Poros."

Metro stopped short and in the summer darkness she could distinguish the sudden blanching of his face.

She put her hand on his arm. "Not the evil, my son, for which you might kill the man who spoke it; no! But they have said that after your wife married you, she repented, and would not take you to her father's house."

"They have lied."

"I *said* so," returned the old woman with a slow smile of great triumph. "Who is it that would shut his door in *your* face? So your father-in-law received you well?"

"He received me not at all, Kyra Sophoula, for he has shut the door of his house in the face of his own daughter, *because* she married me; and therefore she suffers."

The smile died away from the wrinkled old face. "But is he a king, then, this man, that he should do this thing?"

"His forefathers were kings," answered Metro, as he put her into the boat. "Do not spoil your heart's content!" he added, falling unconsciously into the old way of speech. "Some day things will right themselves. So to-morrow, it is agreed; we bring you the child."

Kyra Sophoula nodded her head vigorously. "Without fail you must bring her; I want to show her to Yannoula and to many others."

"Shall we come in the morning?"

"No, in the afternoon; not too late, so that the child should not take cold in the boat, but after noon. The house must be made ready to receive your wife."

"Nay, your house is always ready to receive the Queen herself."

The old woman smiled, well content. "But it must be as it never was, to-morrow."

The next morning after their arrival, Theodora had spent her time unpacking, and had constantly interrupted the arrangement of her belongings, by stepping out on to one of the balconies of the upper rooms, and taking long breaths of the thyme and pine-scented air.

And in the mean while Metro had dispatched Vasiliki to help the woman of the house, and had taken his daughter in his arms to introduce her to the realm of his boyhood. He had rolled her on the warm, pine-carpeted earth, and he had made her listen with uplifted finger to the chirp of the tettix and to the hum of the bees in the heather. He had filled her tiny frock with honeysuckle, and when at last she went off to sleep in his arms, he had sat with her at the foot of the big pine a long time, listening to the divine silence of the island, while his eyes were fixed on the hills beyond, until, in the center of the mirror-like surface of the water, through the lengthened and wavering reflections of the white houses and red roofs of the village, and the inverted cypresses, a black speck surrounded by a blur of white foam showed the incoming steamer, and he knew it was nearly time for the midday meal. Then he stepped carefully down to the house from one rock to the other, with the soft little burden in his arms.

And early in the afternoon they had got into the boat, just the two of them, and the child, and Metro had rowed across to the village. Theodora sat in the stern with her baby, and showed her the rain of shining drops as they were lifted out into the sun, after every dip of the oars into the blue water. And in the village, of course, it was an ovation, and as Metro had expected, a whole procession of old acquaintances had greeted him on the quay, and had accompanied them across the market-place, under the dark Arch, up the rocky street until they reached the narrow, paved courtyard of Kyra Sophoula's little house.

She stood waiting for them at the top of the ladder-like wooden stairs which led to the covered terrace where pots of carnations alternated with big rounded plants of sweet basil. Beside her stood her neighbor and friend Yannoula, a tall woman with dark hair parted under

her widow's kerchief, and deep-set eyes looking quietly out of a thin, sunburned face.

There in the quaint room, with its white walls and curious dark wooden ceiling carved in lozenges, Theodora made acquaintance with her husband's early home. She rejoiced the old woman's heart by taking a deep interest in everything, in the old flowered tiles of the deep window sill, in the green corner cupboards, where she was duly shown the lower shelf where Metro used to keep his schoolbooks; in the highly polished old dower chest, in the holy icons of the Virgin and St. Nicholas before which the little hanging lamp was always kept burning. She passed into the adjoining kitchen and did not fail to remark on the mirror-like brightness of the copper pans and oven trays. These, Kyra Sophoula told her, Metro had insisted on buying with his very first earnings after he went to Paris, so as to replace the original ones which had been sacrificed for him. He had written to Kyr Apostoli the baker, who had brought them over from Piræus, and one day she had returned from an errand to find them shining in their old places. There had been no need for him to spend good money on them — the old earthen pot did well enough for all her cooking! But he had ever been the same from a child; never a thought of saving or spending on himself: what was his was yours always!

And then Theodora had been placed in the seat of honor on the long sofa with its embroidered linen cover, and had tasted Kyra Sophoula's island-famed preserves of little green lemons. Anthi also had been given a few drops of their sweet syrup, and had nearly swallowed the whole spoon in her enthusiasm. Then before sunset, they had rowed home again to the Red House across the bay.

Since that first day they had explored the island well. One morning they had crossed with Kyra Sophoula

and the child and Vasiliki over to one of the gardens of the mainland and had sat under the big walnut trees which dipped their branches in the little walled-in pond; had listened to the pleasant trickle of fresh water as it flowed into channels between the orange and lemon trees; had feasted on ripe grapes and big purple figs, and brought home heavy yellow melons and bunches of late roses.

Another day Metro sent for mules and they went up to the temple of Poseidon, and walked down from there to the great open beach of Vayonia. And there with the scent of the bruised thyme under his feet, Metro remembered his dream. But somehow, he did not speak of it to Theodora. In some ways his wife who walked beside him, talking and laughing, and clinging now and then to his arm for support, seemed less close to him than the strange young girl of his dream, dressed in Byzantine robes, who had stood beside the rock waiting for him, and who had said, "Have I not come to your own country to be yours also?" He could not speak of the one to the other.

On this morning, after Anthi had smeared her mother's face and part of her white dressing-gown with pink stains from her geraniums, and had buried her head in her neck and said a great many things in her own language, she was carried off for her morning sleep. By that time the sun had invaded the corner under the pergola, and they went into the house; but it was a house where you never felt too much indoors; there were openings on all sides; from nearly every room one could step out on to a terrace or a balcony. As they passed inside, the hall door stood wide, and through the open window of the study opposite came the sun filtering through the young pines, and turning the red of the geraniums on the east side of the terrace to flaming rubies.

Theodora sat down to write a letter to Zoe. The last

one had been written in the midst of the depressing heat and dust of the town, and she wished to correct the impression by giving her some idea of her present surroundings.

Some day [she wrote] you must come here with me. There are a few little houses one can hire, if one sees about it early in the year. You may be in the midst of far grander scenery in Switzerland, but you cannot possibly be surrounded by this perfection of coloring. Oh, Zoe! these hills! Their velvety outline against the sky! The soft golden-green masses of pines all up the slopes with their deep brown-green hollows, then the gray-green as they fade into the middle distance, and the blue-green of the most distant. Then the intense blue of the sky, the tawny yellow of the narrow strip of land which divides the bay from the open sea; the deep purple-blue of the water beyond the strip, and the lighter greenish-blue that washes the cactus and the aloes along the edge of the terrace. You will say that my letter is like a painter's palette, or a color-man's catalogue. I want so much to give you even a faint idea of the beauty in which my eyes are rejoicing after the dust of Athens. My dear, do you know what Metro did the other morning? He actually took Anthi into the sea with us! Vasiliki and the widow who keeps the house were horrified; they said a child must be at least a year old. But she enjoyed it, Zoe; she really did. I wish you could have seen her laughing, and gurgling, and plunging from my arms into Metro's and back again to mine, and making such a splash with her little pink feet, and giving sudden, little eager cries of delight. She is an enchanting baby! I give you my word and Metro's for it, and we should know, if any one does.

Then, despairing of putting her daughter's charm into words, she closed her letter and went out to pick honeysuckle for the vases.

They did not go anywhere that evening, — it was too hot, — but sat on the terrace and watched the moon rise out of the sea beyond the Naval School. As it rose higher the water became a thing of dream-like radiance

and the boats which sailed across the track of light were turned into golden. It was perfectly still except for the soft "gluck-gluck-gluck" of the water on the rocks below, and now and then a sound of guitars coming fitfully across the bay. The two sat there almost in silence until eleven o'clock; then Theodora went upstairs to their room, while Metro made the round of the lower floor to close the shutters and doors.

All the windows had been left wide open upstairs in the east room, and the moonlight made great silvery patches on the floor and walls. A long deck-chair had been left out from the afternoon on the stone balcony, and Theodora stepped out into the warm night to bring it in.

Across the bay the lights in the houses and along the shore roughly outlined the shape of the village, up to the ruined mill, their shimmering reflections repeating it in the soft darkness of the water. The great lamps at the water steps of the Naval School made two long streaks of wavering light; closer to her was one flickering light at the primitive little wineshop of the "White Cat" at the edge of the shore, and above it the heavy masses of the hills were dimly outlined against the lighter darkness of the sky.

Theodora advanced to the edge of the balcony, and leaning over the stone ledge, looked far out toward the entrance of the bay. The high, dark shadow of the Aderes covered one half of the splendor of the moonlit water. She felt the serene, cool silence of the night all round her; even with closed eyes she would have known the difference at once from the warm, peopled silence of the day. There was no sound but the distant bark of a sheep dog on the hills and the chirp of the night crickets.

The room door opened behind her and Metro entered with a light in his hand. When he saw she was on the

balcony, he put it out at once, and came toward her. She heard his steps, and without turning round, held out her hand and drew him out beside her.

"Metro," she said, "look!"

The moon was at its highest; a shining globe hanging in dark blue space, and below a broad golden path on the surface of the water.

"Oh, Metro! Metro!" she continued in a hushed voice; "it is 'only' the moonlight on the sea! 'Only' the full moon, the classic full moon, the floating gold on the sea, the silver light on the land. So usual, so tritely beautiful, that no modern artist dare any more paint it, or write about it, or sing of it! Only the same beauty that has been sung of for centuries in almost the self-same words; and yet — O God! God!" And she stretched out her bare white arms to the beauty before her.

Metro was silent, but as he turned his face to the moonlight, she saw that his eyes were wet.

"What is it?" she whispered; "what is it, Metro?"

"It is — it is that you understand. Think!" he added, pressing her head down on to his shoulder; "think! One might be married to a woman beautiful, clever, and kind; she might be a wise housewife, and a good mother, and one might not be able to find one real fault in her, and when one showed her — this, she might say, 'Well, what is this you are showing me? The moon shining on the sea, — have I not seen it a hundred times?' Do you know, my wife, how often I think of this? There are so many men, and women too, who are married to those who cannot see! And I — I have you!"

When he had finished speaking, his lips remained pressed just where the sweep of her hair lifted itself up from her ear. Her hand went up to his cheek, and stroked it gently. "And yet, sometimes, I am afraid I am not all I should be; sometimes I am afraid I make you sad."

"Sometimes, yes," he assented simply. "But what

of that? The greater the love, the more one must pay. And there are moments which are so perfect that there is nothing left to long for; are there not, my sweetness?"

There was silence for a few seconds; then he asked again, "Is not this hour perfect? We two alone — here together — in this beauty — in this night made for love — can we ask for anything more of life?"

She tried to answer; to find her voice; to search for words; but the pause was too long, and suddenly, with a bitter little cry, Metro let himself fall on the deck-chair beside him and covered his face with his hands.

"Ah, what a fool I am!" he muttered harshly; "what a fool! Have I not learned yet that I alone am never sufficient for you!"

"Oh!" she cried; "oh, I have hurt you! I have hurt you!"

She flung herself down, and clasped both her arms fast about him, her head thrown back and all her body pressed to his.

"Metro! My dear one! Make me forget all else! I want to forget! Make me all yours so that nothing else in the world shall count!"

"If I can, will I not do it, my golden love!" he whispered. Then he passed his hands through the thick hair at the nape of her neck and lifted her face, streaming with tears, to his lips.

And they lay there long in the moonlight.

In the early morning, before any one was moving in the house, he proposed to her that they should go down and bathe while the sea was rosy with the first rays of sunrise. They found their bathing-things, tip-toed lightly down the creaking stairs, and ran down to the bathing-cabin.

They swam together at first side by side, through the cool, sunlit water; they untied the boat and rowed it

out nearly as far as the little islet near the Naval School, where the old, disused powder magazine stood. And Metro told Theodora how in his young days the islet used to be peopled with rabbits, and how when he lay there on the thyme, after a swim, they would come up quite close and even nibble at his naked limbs.

Then Metro stood up in the swaying boat and dived, the long, clean dive of the island men, entering the water like a knife, without a splash, and then Theodora climbed over the side, and they swam back pushing the boat before them and tying it up again to the post near the landing-stage.

"You have swum enough," pronounced Metro; "let me take you!"

"How?"

"So; let your body float loose." And he passed one wet brown arm round her shoulders, lifting her head well out of the water, while he continued to swim strongly and rhythmically with the other arm.

"I shall tire you," protested Theodora.

"Never!"

"Do you like to carry me so, through the water?"

"You know!"

And when they stood on the shore, he seized her suddenly, all wet and dripping as she was, and kissed her almost fiercely.

They left their bathing-things in a wet heap, and slipping on big bath cloaks, ran up the broad stone steps laughing.

At the top stood Vasiliki, apronless and disheveled. "Kyrie! Kyria! Will you come quickly, please! The child is not well!"

CHAPTER XX

For three days and nights the fever ran high. They had sent for the naval doctor from the School, but unfortunately he was away on leave, and only the old doctor who had studied in Athens thirty years ago, and since then had never left Poros, was available. In answer to Theodora's agonized questions he repeatedly assured them that there was no possible ground for supposing the illness to be diphtheria; it was simply an inflammation of the tonsils.

As to how it had been contracted, he shrugged his shoulders, and pushed out his lips. Could one tell with so young a child? A few moments too late in the boat; a few moments too long on the terrace after sunset? Yes, it was summer, certainly, but there was always a certain dampness in the evening air. A little too much cold water, perhaps, in the bath? What? she was always sponged with entirely cold water! and had even been dipped in the sea! So young a child!

Metro grasped hold of the doctor's arm so tightly that it made him wince.

"Was *that* the reason?"

"Oh, no; probably not. It only seemed to me a little unusual. But since, as you say, the child has been accustomed to cold water from her birth, why should it be that more than anything else? Are not illnesses flying about everywhere?"

He did his best, this poor Poros doctor, and he came twice and even three times a day when they wanted him; but his experience was limited and he was at his worst with Theodora, who overawed him and made him forget

what he knew. One evening, when the child was a little quieter, she asked him how long the inflammation was likely to last.

"It is very difficult to say."

"But about how long?"

"Do I know? Five or six days, perhaps ten."

Theodora bit her lips. "But what is your own experience? How long have you generally known cases of this kind to last? Surely there must be an average."

At last, when too closely pressed, he ended by saying, as he hurriedly took his leave: "Be easy, Kyria! I will look in my medical dictionary, and I will tell you to-morrow morning."

And Theodora flew upstairs to Metro, who was keeping guard over little Anthi while Vasiliki had gone down to her supper, and related this to him indignantly, with tears in her voice.

"He will look in his dictionary! Could not you or I look in a medical dictionary? Is this a doctor?"

"Hush, my child! See! She sleeps, the little one! Perhaps the fever may not come again."

But it came again in the early hours of the morning, and it came with more violence than before.

Metro, who had been in the room until midnight, had gone to lie down, reassured by the long sleep and calm breathing of the child; Vasiliki also had been sent to take a much-needed rest.

Theodora sat beside the bed, and Kyra Sophoula, who had never left the Red House since the first day of the illness, sat very still in a low chair near the window, her head bent forward on her breast, and her withered old hands crossed in her lap.

Nevertheless, it was she who first saw the change in the child.

Theodora's head had sunk on the pillow beside her, and her eyes had closed; for three days she had not slept.

She was roused by the old woman, bending over the other side of the bed, and muttering something.

"What is it?" she cried, springing to her feet; "what is it?"

"The child is hot again; this cursed fever will not let the poor little bird rest."

Anthi had kicked off the sheet, and was tossing from one side to the other, throwing her tiny hands over her head.

Theodora felt her, the skin was dry and burning to the touch. "Give me the thermometer."

"Eh; why do you want to be always looking at the numbers; it only torments the child; there is much fever. Any one can see that."

"Give me the thermometer, please."

Kyra Sophoula took it from the little basin of water where it stood on the chest of drawers, wiped it with a corner of her apron, and handed it silently across the bed. Theodora thanked her with one word, but before using the thermometer she wiped it again with a piece of cotton wool which she took out of a closed glass jar.

A few moments later Theodora ran into her own room. "Metro! Metro! Wake up, Metro!"

He sprang up at the first call; Theodora saw that he had not undressed.

"What is it?"

"The fever has risen again. The doctor must come at once. Will you wake the boatman; he is in the end room of the servants' quarters."

"No," said Metro decidedly; "I shall run much quicker myself, on foot round by the Narrow Beach. Unless," he added, hesitating a moment, "you prefer that I should stay with you, and send the man?"

"No, no!" she cried wildly; "you go!" And she pushed him toward the door of the room.

When she returned to the next room, Kyra Sophoula

and Vasiliki were standing by the bed. The latter was trying to keep the little hands still, and crooning as she stroked them.

"Now the little golden child must keep its little hands quiet, and now the little golden child must shut its little eyes and go to sleep!"

But the poor "little golden child" could neither keep still nor go to sleep. The little face was of a purplish red, the little fingers clenched and unclenched themselves, and there was a constant wail of "Mm . . . Mm . . . Mm . . . Mm . . ."

Theodora knelt down beside the bed and passed her hand all over the little body. The skin felt more burning than before. She turned to Vasiliki.

"Bring me some vinegar in a cup, a large basin of water, and the bath sponge from the dressing-room!"

"What will you do?" asked Kyra Sophoula.

"Sponge her with vinegar and water."

"Sponge her! With her little body all on fire as it is! But she will take worse cold, my little bird!"

"No," said Theodora rather curtly; "it will send the fever down."

"Will you not wait, at least, until the doctor comes?" essayed Kyra Sophoula half timidly, while Vasiliki held the handle of the door in her hand and looked hesitatingly from one to the other.

"Fetch the water, Vasiliki!" ordered her mistress.

As the woman was leaving the room Kyra Sophoula followed her and whispered: "You will find hot water in the kitchen; I heard Kyra Marigo light the fire sometime ago."

"I want cold water, called out Theodora sharply," — "quite cold from the water jars."

Kyra Sophoula said nothing, but made the sign of the cross and went and stood by the window.

The water was brought and Theodora sponged the

little body all over three or four times quickly but thoroughly. The relief was almost immediate; the little hands became quiet, the face was less flushed, and the wailing ceased. Theodora covered the child over with the sheet, and sat down on a low chair keeping her hand on the pulse.

After a few moments Kyra Sophoula came on tiptoes toward the bed, and leaning over touched the child's forehead.

"Glory be to Thee, O God!" she ejaculated, but Theodora never stirred. Then in a moment the old woman added: "You were right that it brings the fever down. I see you know many things, my daughter! But here, you see, we know only the old things that come to us from our fathers and our mothers, and in illness we fear cold water."

"It is always done for high fever," said Theodora, but she did not look up.

The old woman went back to the window. The morning sun came streaming through the open balcony doors, and a bee buzzed over the handful of honeysuckle that stood in a little green jar on the table. The child stirred uneasily, and gave two or three little cries.

"I see a boat," said Kyra Sophoula, "and Metro is in it."

Theodora sprang up. "And the doctor with him?"

"No," answered the old woman slowly; "he is alone." Then she added: "Perhaps the doctor follows on foot; he may not have been ready. I will go down to the landing-stage and see what Metro says. Be easy! The doctor will be coming after him."

But the doctor was not coming at all. As Metro came up the stone steps with Kyra Sophoula he told her what had happened the night before; that the poor fat doctor had slipped on a rope on the quay getting out of his boat, and had broken not one, but both legs.

"Bah! the poor unfortunate one! And who can mend them for him here?"

"No one; the naval doctor is on leave."

"And what will happen?"

"His wife was as a mad woman; but Kyr Apostoli advised her to take the poor man to the hospital in Athens by the steamer that leaves now this morning; two neighbors are going with her to help, and they have lent them a stretcher from the Naval School."

Kyra Sophoula wrung her hands.

Upstairs when they opened and closed the door softly, Metro, his voice sinking to a deeper tone as it always did when he was agitated, told Theodora of the terribly unfortunate accident.

Theodora stood perfectly still for a moment, her eyebrows gathered into one straight line and her lips pressed tightly together. She looked at the child on the bed, who was again beginning to toss and turn and wail, and then out of the open window where the sun was dotting the surface of the morning sea with millions of diamonds.

"He is leaving by the steamer this morning?"

"Yes."

"We must go also; there is no other way. I will wrap the child up well and carry her myself, and we will telegraph to Dr. Paschali to meet us at Piræus. Vasiliki shall gather up some things; it does not matter what we leave behind. But I *will* not stay here with the child so ill, and no doctor! I will not! Metro, we *must* go! Take the boat and the man, and row both of you very fast, and beg the steamer to wait; they shall be well paid; and send back a boat with four men for us! Metro, do you hear? Oh, for God's sake, don't wait to argue! Any moment it may be too late."

Too late! He tried to tell her gently that it was too late already, that the steamer had whistled for the third

and last time as he came up the steps of the landing-stage, and that even now as they were talking the smoke of its funnels was disappearing behind the lighthouse.

But it was not the Theodora he knew who listened to him, — the quiet, self-contained Theodora, always convincible by logic, always the first to find a way out of difficult situations; it was a stricken woman clinging to the back of a chair, and seized every moment with a fresh fit of trembling. At last she spoke; but it was disjointedly.

"But you — since you knew — since the steamer was leaving — why did you not think of stopping it — for a few moments? You could — have sent — have come — for us! Did you not think at once that — that we could not stay here? I could have taken my child and run all the way! — Why did you let it go? Why? Why?"

Her hands loosed their hold on the chair-back and fell helpless and limp on either side.

A seagull flew before the open window and dipped, and rose again, and disappeared before Metro answered in a low voice: —

"I did not know whether it would be safe for the child to be moved; so I went to the telegraph office and sent a message to Dr. Paschali; I explained the illness and the fever to him, and I asked him either to telegraph to me to bring her back, or to come here himself, by this evening's boat with a trained nurse."

Theodora swallowed once or twice and pressed her hands over her lips. "Yes, of course; you did quite right. It was the best thing to do."

Then the big clock in the tower of the Naval School struck half past nine and it was the hour for Anthi's medicine.

Metro laid his hand on Kyra Sophoula's shoulder. "I saw Yannoula outside your house and I told her to

come here and help. There may be some washing or something that she can do."

"You did well."

He looked at the wrinkled old face and the tired, sunken eyes.

"Have you had your coffee yet?"

"Not yet; but it does not matter."

"It matters; go downstairs and get it!"

"But — she may want me."

"Vasiliki is here now. Go!"

And she went obediently.

Yannoula arrived soon afterwards, brimming over with sympathy and anxiety to help. Did she not know what it was to be in agony over one's child? Ah, God! Did she not know? And all day long the two women helped Vasiliki, and were at Theodora's beck and call.

But alas, Poros ways were not Vienna ways, nor yet London ways! Theodora to her disgust found Kyra Sophoula soaping one end of a sheet which had got soiled so as to use it again. She was a clean old creature as far as her lights went, but her cleanliness was of freshly scrubbed boards, of pots and pans always in good condition, of decent white kerchiefs renewed at stated intervals; what could she know of daintiness, of overflowing linen presses, of sheets changed daily in sickness? It would have seemed to her a wicked extravagance to throw a sheet or a towel to the soiled linen because of one stain. She would break her old back fetching and carrying in the sick-room, she would cheerfully go without rest, but of the need of hygienic precautions, of the use of disinfectants she was totally ignorant. Theodora was steeped in modern training, having followed ambulance classes in Paris for three winters. She was by nature both tactful and patient, but it was the first time in her life that she had been actually anxious about some one of her very own, and anxiety brings impatience in its

train, so that in the afternoon, when Metro returned from the village where he had been to see whether there was an answer to his telegram, he found Kyra Sophoula listlessly sitting on the step outside the dining-room door, her knitting in her hands, though she was not working.

"How is the child?"

"I think she is better than in the morning."

"Where is my wife?"

"Upstairs with the little one."

"And how is it you are out here, Kyra Sophoula? Are you tired, perhaps?"

"Yes," the old woman lied bravely; "I am very tired; my feet will not support me any longer." Then, as he stood looking down at her a little curiously, for in all his life he never remembered hearing her confess to weariness, she asked him, "Did you receive an answer?"

"No, not yet; the doctor must have been out this morning. The telegraph clerk promised to send the answer as soon as it comes. There is a new misfortune. The steamer is not coming this evening. It is going to the dockyard in Piræus for three days to be cleaned. Louka just told me."

"But, is it sure?"

"He heard it from the captain himself yesterday."

There was silence between them for a few seconds. Metro sat with his back bent, his elbows on his knees, his head in his hands, and his eyes on the ground as the peasants sit. He sat there stolidly, heavily, clumsily. The man of science, the man of the world he had made himself, was gone for the moment. There was no one there but plain Metro; Anthi's Metro of the old days.

"Do not eat your heart out, my son! Perhaps the doctor will send you word to take the child to him in the morning; and even should he think better to come here, he will arrive at noon to-morrow; it is only one

night longer to wait, and the child is better, I am sure she is better. God will have pity on us! You will see!"

But he did not seem to hear her, so the old woman crossed her hands in her lap, and sat very still.

After a little he rose slowly. "I must go and tell my wife."

Theodora, who was measuring out some medicine, took the news very quietly this time; only her hand trembled, so that part of the teaspoonful was spilled on the plate and she had to refill it.

"At what time can the doctor arrive to-morrow?"

"At eleven or half past at the latest."

"And if he telegraphs that the child can travel, when can we start?"

"At nine in the morning."

She did not answer, but put the spoon to the child's lips. Vasiliki on the other side of the bed, holding a towel, began her sing-song: "Now the little golden child will drink its little milk."

But the "golden child" had been deceived too often. She tightened her lips and turned her head peevishly away. After trying again two or three times, Theodora was at last reduced to administering the medicine by force. There was much crying and sputtering, and suddenly the child was violently sick. Poor Metro saw her screaming and vomiting and looked about him in despair.

"Do not mind, Metro," said Yannoula, who was filling a glass of water; "sometimes it does them good."

At that moment the door opened and Kyra Sophoula came in. She saw the three women round the bed with towels and water, she saw the child heaving and sobbing; she saw the helpless, frightened expression on Metro's face, and she fancied that some terrible turn of the illness had set in. She threw her arms up wildly.

"Oh, my poor little one! Oh, the poor little bird! O Christ and Holy Virgin, help us!"

She began to cry out in long, wailing cries, as the women of the people do. When Kyra Sophoula had been younger and stronger, she had ever been a woman of action rather than of speech. No one had ever heard her lament while there was still work to be done. "He who must weep," she had been wont to say, "let him wait first until the ship has sunk." But she was older now and feebler, and calamity was threatening her boy — her Metro. So she wrung her old shaking hands and moaned aloud.

Theodora shivered all over, as the piercing shrieks, getting more and more out of control, filled the room.

"Take her away!" she said to Metro in a low, strained voice; "take her away from here!"

And Metro put his arm round the old woman and little by little persuaded her and led her across the passage to another room, where she slipped from his arm, and crouched down on the floor at the foot of a bed. Her white kerchief had been pushed back, her gray hair was disordered, and suddenly she looked very old. In vain Metro brought her a chair and tried to lift her bodily on to it. In vain he assured her again and again of what she herself had told him a little while ago: that the child was better, that there was no longer cause for anxiety; in vain he begged her to get up.

"No," came a murmur from the bent old figure on the floor; "no, my son, let me be!"

At last in despair he went down to the woman of the house and asked for help. The widow, whom he found washing dishes, wiped her hands on her blue apron, and looked at him reassuringly, with faded blue eyes which had once been beautiful.

"Leave her to me! I will take her a cup of coffee and a glass of water and a rusk, and we will talk a little to-

gether, and she will soon be well. Nothing has passed her lips since morning, and her years are many and weigh on her."

So Metro, reassured, left her and returned to the sick-room.

Little Anthi was fast asleep, lying in clean sheets and breathing easily; Yannoula and Vasiliki sat one on either side of the bed talking softly.

"Where is your mistress?" asked Metro of the latter.

"She went to her room, Kyrie, after the child fell asleep."

Theodora was out on the balcony of their bedroom, leaning her elbows on the stone balustrade. Her face was in her hands and her fingers, pressing tightly, had made red marks on her cheeks. Metro came out beside her.

"She is better, the child."

"Let us hope so," she answered rather shortly.

"But," persisted Metro, "Kyra Sophoula was telling me that her skin was not so dry this afternoon and that she keeps her hands quieter, and both she and Yannoula say that is a good sign."

Theodora shrugged her shoulders without turning round. "Are they doctors, these old women?"

There was silence for a few moments; then Metro said slowly: "These 'old women,' as you call them, have had much experience in sickness."

Theodora broke off a handful of leaves from the climbing wisteria which was twining all over the stone balustrade, and flung them violently on to the terrace below.

"Your old — ladies, then, or old — princesses, or whatever you wish me to call them, may have all the experience in the world, but I would — oh, so gratefully — exchange them all for a properly trained sick-nurse!"

Metro laid his hand on her shoulder. "I know, I know; but can we help it that the steamer does not come?"

"Did I say you could help it?" she returned in a tired voice. Then — "Metro."

"Yes."

"If the telegram does not come?"

"But why should it not come?"

"But *if* it does not," she persisted; "then we will take the child and leave by the morning boat."

"Do you mean without waiting for the one that arrives at noon? Paschali may come in that."

"And if he does not, it means waiting, in uncertainty, another twenty-four hours. I cannot do it."

"It might harm the child," said Metro slowly; "there is always some wind on the sea; she might get fresh cold."

"I shall keep her wrapped up below, in the cabin, of course," said Theodora impatiently.

"But in the open boat to get to the steamer? Even if I order a boat with four men, it will always take ten minutes. No, my wife, I think we had better wait."

"I *will* not wait! If Dr. Paschali were coming he would telegraph; he may be away — ill — dead! Do I know? And then we should be stranded here with no help in the midst of a lot of chattering, screaming, useless — people. No! No! No! It would drive me mad!"

Metro came a step closer and put his arm round her shoulders. "I know it is hard to wait; but there is nothing else possible."

Theodora disengaged herself and retreated toward the door of the room. "Do you mean to say that if no telegram comes you will keep us here? That we shall not leave!"

"We cannot go," he answered gravely.

"Why?"

"Because I am afraid of the journey for the child; because I do not think it wise."

"You do not think it wise!" And as she faced him

there was a recoil of hostility in all her bearing. "And I? Do I not count?"

He raised his eyes and met hers steadily, and she saw that he had quite decided. "You know that you always count above all. But in this case I am the father, and the responsibility is mine."

Theodora did not answer; she stepped over the threshold of the balcony door and passed into the gathering dusk of the room.

He stood hesitating on the balcony. "Theodora."

"Yes." She had already crossed the room and her hand was on the door that led into the passage.

"Where are you going?"

"Back to the child."

"Wait a moment! I want to tell you — "

"There is nothing more I need to hear. You are the master, and you have decided. Even if I chose to judge for myself, and leave with the child, I have no one to help me; you could prevent me."

"Theodora!"

"The only thing I particularly beg is that while I *have* to stay here, you will see that the child's room is not crowded with various helpers, who probably — mean to be very kind, but who are quite useless. The nurse is sufficient for me."

"You shall not be troubled by any one."

She left the room, and Metro sank down into a chair and dropped his head on his arms and never raised it for a long time, not even much later, when it was quite dark, and Yannoula came softly into the room.

She touched him on the shoulder, and he started up with a terrified look on his face, and looked at her inquiringly.

"No," she said; "do not be anxious! The child still sleeps, and she is cooler. See! They have brought this in a boat; wait, till I light a candle that you may read it!"

Before the little flame brightened up, he had torn open the envelope and held the telegram impatiently to the light.

Have only just returned from Piræus. If child better, bring her by first opportunity; if worse telegraph again.

SPIRO PASCHALI.

He handed the crumpled paper to Yannoula. "Will you give it to my wife, please?"

"I? Will you not come yourself?"

"No. The doctor from Athens says that we must take the child to him and I must go into the village and explain to Louka what boat I want him to send in the morning. Tell her where I am going." And he strode down the stairs without looking behind him.

The journey next day was accomplished without the slightest hitch. The sea was quite calm and Anthi slept most of the time in her mother's arms.

From Piræus they drove to Athens, and as they passed the Square, Metro sent a messenger boy to announce their arrival to Dr. Paschali, so that he was at their house almost before the child had been undressed and put into bed. He stayed over an hour and made a thorough examination of her throat, to which poor little Anthi objected very strongly indeed.

The turn for the better had certainly taken place, he pronounced, and he hoped that with care and minute following of his instructions there was no fear of a relapse. He wrote various prescriptions, and when he left he took Metro with him to have them made up and to bring them back.

It was almost dark when Triantafyllia brought the three bottles to Theodora, where she sat beside the cot, while Vasiliki unpacked and put away the child's belongings.

"Did they send these from the chemist's?"

"No, Kyria, the master brought them himself."

"Where is he?"

"In his study."

Theodora found Metro at his writing table; it was too dark to read or write, but he sat there half hidden by the shadows of the room.

"Metro!"

"Yes."

"Metro, did you think me very unreasonable, very unkind, there? I — I — think I did not quite know what I was doing or saying."

"I know."

"And I do not want you to think me ungrateful to Kyra Sophoula, who was always so good to you. I never could be really ungrateful to her in my heart."

"No, Theodora."

"But I want to explain — You see I am not accustomed to little children yet. Dr. Paschali was just telling me that fever goes up so very suddenly at her age, especially when the throat is affected; but of course I did not know — I could not have stayed there, Metro! It would have driven me mad. You understand, Metro?"

"Of course I understand."

"And you — there is nothing — You are not vexed with me about anything?"

"No, Theodora, no!"

"Because I should be miserable if you were vexed with me."

"You must not be miserable! You must *never* be miserable!" He said it a little fiercely, and in the dark she laid her head on his shoulder and he held her very close to him.

But they did not speak again of Poros for a long time.

PART III

CHAPTER XXI

In the Dandolo sitting room the lamps had long been lighted. Such modern facilities as electricity had not yet penetrated to the old houses in the Street of Germanus of old Patras. Petro Dandolo, sitting on a low stool, was holding, on widely extended hands, a skein of white wool for his mother who was rapidly winding it into a big ball. A small, unfinished coverlet lay in her lap. Adelina, who had been married some months to one of the Casaneras of Corfu, was sitting in an armchair on the other side of the room. Her pretty, fair hair glistened in the lamplight, and she sat there contentedly watching the two, her hands resting idly on her knees.

"And you mean to tell me," the old lady was saying, as she passed her ball up and down through the wool to get rid of a troublesome tangle, "that he has not been near them?"

Petro shook his head.

"Nor sent any message?"

"I have not heard of any."

"And this is the first time he has been in Greece since their marriage?"

"The first, yes."

"How long have they been married? I forget."

"About five years, is it not?"

"Five years and a half," put in Adelina, who had an excellent memory for dates; "or very nearly; I remember they were married on the first of December, and it is nearly the end of April now."

"How long is it since her father arrived here?" asked the old lady.

"About a week."

"Oh, I thought it was longer; there is time yet, perhaps."

Petro's laugh had a touch of irony. "My dear mother, Michael Douka is nothing if not correct. If he had come to Athens intending to pronounce absolution and bestow his paternal blessing on the Philippides, he would have driven to their house straight from the steamer. That he drove to a hotel is proof positive that the strained relations will remain unaltered."

"Perhaps," said Adelina, "if they were to take him by surprise some day: just go to him and take the little girl with them; she is so pretty and sweet — "

"No, oh, no!" said Petro very decidedly; "Metro would never do that. He had enough of chasing his father-in-law half over Europe when they were on their honeymoon."

His mother broke off a knot in her wool sharply and tied two ends together. "I confess, such unnatural parents are beyond me. What did he expect his daughter to marry after all? A king's son!"

"That would have satisfied him, I dare say, but he would not have been unduly elated."

His mother dropped the ball into her workbasket, and Petro got up and stretched his arms above his head.

"Do you know," he continued, "who else arrived in Athens this afternoon?"

"No, who?"

"Costa Manelli."

"Really? How do you know?"

"I saw him about four o'clock this afternoon in a carriage with luggage, coming from the Larissa Station with his father and sister."

"Did you speak to him?"

"No; they were all talking and laughing together as the carriage passed. He did not see me. He is returning

from London for good, you know; he has been appointed chief of a section in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs."

"Ah, how happy his father will be to have him here permanently! If only Mario's regiment were stationed here in Athens," she continued, looking at her daughter, "and he were not carrying you off to Corfu!"

"Why, mother," exclaimed Adelina; "Corfu is not so far off, and it will only be for a year or two, probably."

"But such long years! And far or near, it is always away. Ah, you don't know, you young ones! But wait a bit and you will! Just wait a little!" She bent her head over her work for a few seconds; then, — "Come here and tell me if this is wide enough," she said.

Adelina rose rather slowly. She came round behind the old lady's chair, and mother and daughter bent over the little coverlet, together.

Costa Manelli found it impossible to wait for his father and sister the next morning. There had been some talk of their all going out together, but the call of Athens, coming in at all the open windows on a Sunday morning in April, was not to be resisted. He found, too, that his father rose later than he used to do, and that this was Polymnia's morning for putting out clean house linen. So as soon as he had finished breakfast and delighted old Gerassimos's heart by telling him that his coffee alone was worth all the journey from London, he started out, going straight to the Square.

But he had been too impatient; it was early yet, and not a single friend or acquaintance did he find outside Zacharatos's. Neither was it time for the military music, nor for the change of guard outside the Palace. Suddenly he determined to go and surprise Theodora and Metro, instead of waiting for the afternoon. They knew he had arrived, of course, but they would not expect him so early.

He took the longest way round, by the Zappion. It was good to walk. The air was like wine, and the sun not yet hot enough to avoid. He went up the Pepper-Tree Avenue, keeping close to the palings of the Palace Garden, and smiling instinctively at all the children he met; two or three times he caught himself swinging his walking-stick round and round. The young gayety of Athens was in his mood: the gayety of a people ever young through ages of youth.

But at Theodora's house a disappointment awaited him.

His ring was answered by Triantafyllia, who smiled at him with interest; she knew that Kyria Polymnia's brother had been expected.

"Oh, but my lady will be sorry!"

"She is out, then?"

"She is out; yes; and the master too."

"Has she gone to church?"

"No, Kyrie; not to-day; she was coming to see you; I heard her say so."

"Ah, we have crossed each other. What a pity! Is the little one in? Can I see her?"

"She is out also, Kyrie; my lady took her with her."

"Well, it will be for another time. Tell your mistress, in case I do not find her at our house, that I was very sorry to miss her."

"You must come again this afternoon; I know they will be in, because yesterday we made a cake for tea, and Kyrios Arnoux comes nearly always on Sunday afternoons and others too."

Costa smiled at the invitation. "Very well, tell them to expect me." And he walked off at a rapid pace. But it slackened as he turned into the wide Kiphissia Road, and he even stopped a moment to throw the appreciative glance of a born color-lover at the little Byzantine church

with its dull red walls and faded green dome inside the guarding circle of tall cypresses.

He knew every feature of the road, and almost all the inhabitants — at least by name — of the fine stone and marble houses, each in its own garden, which lined the avenue. He did not in the least miss the smooth lawns of England and ornate flower beds; rather did his eye rest with delight on the white and yellow Banksia roses clustering in thick masses over stone pillars and through tall railings; on the homelike, familiar look of the big palms with the tiny flowers growing in the rough crevices of their trunks.

Long before he reached the gates of the Laras' garden he felt the powerful scent of the mandarin and orange blossoms, and heard the splash of the water from the fountain as it fell into the great stone basin.

The gates were closed, but as he came up to them, he caught sight, through the railings, of a woman's figure far down in the depths of the garden; just the flutter of a gray skirt against a mass of foliage. He recognized the outline at once, and as he hesitated a second, he was evidently recognized also, for a gardener boy came flying down the path and the gates were quickly thrown back.

"Will you not come in, Kyrie? The lady sent me to tell you."

Zoe stood against a high green wall, one arm full of trailing branches of honeysuckle; she advanced a step as he came nearer, and looked up with a heightened color, but did not speak for a few seconds.

It was Costa who pressed the hand she held out, and said: "How good of you to call me in! It is such a delight to be seeing all my old friends again. Of course I inquired about you all from Polymnia and from my father, but I scarcely hoped to see you so soon."

Zoe smiled. "Fate is kind sometimes. If you had

come half an hour ago, you would have found me unpacking a case of bottles of some special make of blacking which Aunt Virginia brings from Manchester for her shoes! This" — and she glanced at the handful of honeysuckle — "*does* make a better picture, does it not?"

Costa's answer was perhaps more impersonal than it might have been to another woman. "A delightful one; but indeed I can wish for no better picture gallery than the whole of Athens offers to my eyes this morning! I have been out since an impossible hour steeping myself in the home atmosphere."

"You are always glad to return, I know. And you found them well at home?"

"Yes, oh, yes. Polymnia is not *much* stouter than when I last saw her, and so happy to have her husband here on his long leave; and the children have grown out of all knowledge: Despina is going to have a lovely figure."

"And your father?" asked Zoe as he paused.

"Well, at his age, every year tells, you know. He struck me as rather tired-looking, but he assures me he is quite well and strong." Then he added: "I have just come from Theodora's, but they were out; however, their maid most kindly invited me to return in the afternoon, and I mean to accept her invitation."

Zoe laughed. "Yes, do! We always drop in to tea there on Sundays."

"How are they?"

"Theodora is, I think, handsomer than she used to be; perhaps you may find her a little quieter. Metro is the same dear fellow as always; one in a thousand!"

"Yes," said Costa heartily, "he is."

"He is not exactly like any type of man I know," went on Zoe. "Perhaps it is the transition from one class to another of an exceptionally intelligent man; I don't quite know; but for me, he forms a type apart. I fancy Theodora does not quite understand how very rare his

entire devotion to her is. He never has failed her, and never will, in any difficulty, and he never lets her be troubled if he can take the trouble on himself. It may not sound much as I say it — "

"But," added Costa, "it is nearly everything. And the baby?" he asked, after a moment's pause; "she was not born when I left, and now, she is — how old?"

"She will be five next September. But you must see her; she is most difficult to describe. If you can imagine a blend of a drop of honey, a sunbeam, and a baby whirlwind, you may form some vague idea of little Anthi."

"The children showed me her photograph; she is an exceedingly pretty child."

"They say she is the image of Theodora's mother."

"And you who know Theodora so well, do you think that by now — I mean — is she quite happy?"

"Is any one ever 'quite happy'? But of course I understand what you mean. Well, I cannot tell you exactly; there are times when she seems quite content; she talks of him much less — "

"You have heard that he is here in Athens?"

"Yes, I know, but Theodora does not."

"She does not know!"

"No. And I think she ought to be told; the shock of meeting him somewhere unexpectedly would be terrible for her. But Metro is afraid; he hoped Douka might be only passing through, or staying a very few days; and he begged me to say nothing; so of course I could not."

"Oh, but he must," said Costa; "I shall tell him so this afternoon."

"It is strange," mused Zoe, "that she should not know. Because from one and the other, from her cousins in London, and from friends in Paris, she has always, until lately at least, been kept well informed of old Douka's movements and doings."

"It seems a pity to tell things about others," remarked Costa rather vaguely; "it prevents people forgetting."

"She does not want to, you see."

"No," he said slowly; "Theodora would not." Then, after a scarcely perceptible pause, "Tell me about your cousin," he said; "is he in Athens?"

"Nasso? Yes; he was away at Toulon for more than eighteen months, but he has been back some time. He is in the house now, having his Sunday morning duty talk with Aunt Virginia. Come in and see him! He will be very grateful for an interruption."

Costa took the honeysuckle from her and they went into the house together.

That same afternoon Theodora was arranging her tea table, with Triantafyllia hovering rather uselessly around, bringing now and then a plate or a little silver dish as directed.

For Triantafyllia was still a member of the household. When threatened with dismissal, which had frequently happened, she would say with a shrug of her square shoulders, "What can I do? If it be my fate to lose such a good house — I shall lose it!" But somehow she had stayed on. Theodora could not forget one day two years ago, when she had been prostrated with a racking headache and Triantafyllia, who had been going out to a wedding, stayed in quite simply and as a matter of course. "Her lady," she had explained to Metro, might want tea, and "surely the cook could not make it as she likes it."

But time had not taught her much; she was always terribly clumsy. As Theodora stepped back to look at a bunch of red roses she had just placed in the middle of the table, Triantafyllia managed to be standing right behind her, so that a paper bag of biscuits she was holding was upset all over the table.

'It is nothing, Kyria, nothing! I will pick them up at once. And how lucky they did not fall on the floor."

"What are they?" asked Theodora.

"Almond biscuits."

"Yes, I see. But where did you find them? I did not order any this morning."

"They are those that remained over from Thursday," answered the girl, "and they are enough for a whole plate."

"No; they must be stale."

"But they are not very dry, Kyria, and they will save the fresh cake."

"Take them away, please," said Theodora shortly; "I shall not require them."

She left the table and the discomfited Triantafyllia, passed into the other room, and sat down rather listlessly in one of the armchairs. Now and then weary disgust would overtake her for all the little shifts and expedients to which she seemed eternally condemned. It was pleasant to be praised for the really good management which experience and a logical brain had evolved from the dismal chaos of her first months of household economy, but when all was said and done they *were* shifts, and she longed with a sick longing to have done with them all.

Suddenly it occurred to her that she had not reminded the cook that hot scones were to be served in a covered dish and that Aglaia was quite capable of sending them in, as she had done once before, spread out on one of the largest dinner dishes. So she got up from the chair and crossed the hall in the direction of the kitchen.

As she walked with a quick, firm step she scarcely looked older than at the time of her marriage. Her hair arranged close round her head, according to the decrees of fashion of 1912, made her look slighter, and her dress of gray chiffon was well thought out. She had always loved perfection in details, but no one ever noticed her dress before looking at herself. It was always she

who wore the dress and not the dress which was worn by her. She gave the impression of being absolutely unconscious of what she wore.

While she was out of the room, the doorbell rang, and Triantafyllia ushered in Costa Manelli, assuring him that her lady would be with him "now, at once."

Costa walked into the sitting room and looked about him with great interest. When he had left Athens the last time it had been soon after Metro's and Theodora's marriage, and he had never seen their house.

He gave an approving look to the Rhodes plate, and to a slim Venetian lamp with its hanging extinguisher and snuffers; he glanced at the books in the upper shelves and he picked up one which was lying face downward on an armchair. It was a copy of the "Unpublished Coins of the Seleucidan Kings of Syria," and he gathered from its position that Metro's habits were not any more orderly than they used to be, but that he had evidently made considerable progress in English.

The door opened hurriedly. "Costa!"

"Why, Theodora, my dear!"

She stretched out both hands and he bent forward and kissed her twice. "It *is* good to see you again, and to know that you have come back to stay."

"Where is Metro?"

"He went out after lunch to see Vanoussaki about some article in to-morrow's paper, but he will be back very soon; he knew you were coming."

"And the angel-baby?"

"Such a big 'baby' now! She is not back from her walk yet, but I told Vasiliki not to keep her out long."

"I am so curious to see her. Is she shy? Will she come to me?"

"Anthi shy! Wait until you see her!"

Costa retreated a pace. "My dear Theodora, I had forgotten how very nice you are to look at! As for the

five years which have passed since I last saw you, there is not a trace of them! And please note that this is not a stupid, ordinary compliment, but an aggrieved expression of sincerest envy; look at my gray hairs!"

"Where? I cannot see any."

"Here!" — and he pointed to his temple; "quite a lot."

"Oh," said Theodora, "I see; there must be quite five or six, I should say. Now come and sit here on the sofa and tell me all you have been doing in London, when the minister was away, and you were chargé d'affaires."

"My dear, like 'Kim,' I did 'nothing with immense success.'"

"I don't believe you. Andriotti told me that Venizelos himself insisted on having you back here at the Foreign Ministry, because he said it was a waste having such a man as you just a secretary in a legation abroad, and that your place was here."

"Andriotti probably wished to please you and turned a simple word of approval from high quarters into very flowery language."

"But no, I assure you, he is always most exact, and Venizelos also added that — "

But Costa did not hear what else the Prime Minister had said, for the door was flung open and Metro, Monsieur Arnoux, Nasso Lara, Zoe, and Miss Burney all came in together. There was a general hum of welcome and greeting. Costa stood smiling for a few seconds with both hands clasped in Metro's and Nasso's arm round his shoulder; then he disengaged himself to turn to Miss Burney and kiss her hand.

"Polymnia wrote once that you had gone to Ireland," he said, "and I was afraid I might not have found you in Athens."

A keen, pleasant smile lighted up the plain face, and

the small, gray eyes twinkled under the black eyebrows. "I went, and I stayed quite a long time; but I came back again. Vanity dies very hard, you know; and I found I was nobody at all in Ireland."

"While here," put in Nasso, "there is nobody who is so much 'somebody.'"

Monsieur Arnoux, always most carefully dressed, but stooping now, and the gray of his hair turned to snow white, was speaking to Theodora. "The little one will be here in a moment; we passed her in the street."

"Yes," said Metro, "she caught sight of Monsieur Arnoux and wanted to fling herself after the carriage; Vasiliki had hard work to hold her back."

As they spoke they saw Triantafyllia cross the hall and open the door at the head of the stairs, admitting a struggling group of two; Vasiliki, a little fatter, a little more scant of breath, and as broad-aproned as ever, was grasping the two ends of a pink ribbon and vainly trying to tie it in a bow round the waist of a little girl who was energetically trying to escape from her.

"Now, do good little children go into a drawing room all untidy, when there is company there? Now, stand still, like a little golden girl, while I tie your ribbon!"

But the "little golden girl" would not stand still, and her cheeks were flushed almost to the color of the ribbon. At last with a cry of "Ah-noo! Ah-noo!" she escaped from her nurse and rushed into the sitting-room, head first, caught her foot in a loose rug, and fell with the rug twisted round her. Without waiting to be extricated she struggled up, got the ribbon of her hat entangled in her brown curls, bumped against the leg of a table, and fell back once more rather suddenly, in a sitting posture.

In a second she had picked herself up, and beaming round on all present, announced: "I did fall down!"

Nasso caught her up and deposited her on a table

among various books and frames. "Le lendemain," he hummed; "elle était souri — an — te!"

From the vantage-place of this height Anthi looked about her triumphantly, her eyes shining like dark stars in the little pink face.

"Ah-noo!" she cried; "Ah-noo!"

The syllables coming from her lips had quite the sound of a Chinese name, but Monsieur Arnoux knew it for his. He put his arms round the little figure, and his lips rested on her hair.

"Anthi! My cherished one! But how pretty your frock is to-day!"

It was a short white linen frock embroidered and bordered with pale pink. The child looked up questioningly into the old man's face; the open-eyed solemnity of babyhood had nòt yet left her.

"No," she said, shaking her head slowly; "not 'to-day.' I did put my pwetty fwock on, because it is 'to-mowwow.'"

Puzzled looks were exchanged and Theodora came to the rescue.

"A certain little girl wanted to put that frock on yesterday, but she was told it could only be worn 'to-morrow.' So now, you see, to-morrow has come and she is wearing it!"

Anthi had already clambered down from her perch and was running out of the room.

"Where are you going?" asked her father, trying to catch her.

"In — in Vasiliki's pawasol," she answered enigmatically as she slipped through his detaining hands.

In a moment she was back again, with a very crushed sprig of honeysuckle which she held up triumphantly to Monsieur Arnoux.

"Ah-noo — Ah-noo, I picked it in the Woyal Gardens my vewy own self, all for you!"

A light broke out on the old Frenchman's face, as he stooped to pick up the little thing clinging round his knees.

"Ah, the naughty little maid! And what will the King say if you pick his flowers?"

"If the King is cwoss," answered Anthi promptly, "I will tell him it was for Ah-noo, the fower!"

"Ah," said Monsieur Arnoux, kissing the little hands that wandered over his face; "of course, after that, the King can say nothing!"

"And what about the new uncle?" asked Costa; "come here, Anthi, and let us make friends!"

The child, at a word from her mother, went to him obediently, stood by him, let him kiss her, and thanked him very prettily for the box of Paris chocolates which he produced from the pocket of his overcoat in the hall, but as soon as possible, she announced, "Please, I want to go," and ran back to Monsieur Arnoux.

"I see," said Costa, "that you are old lovers."

"Monsieur Arnoux," said Theodora, smiling, "is the only one who has permission to spoil Anthi, and he abuses it frightfully."

Just then Triantafyllia threw open the door and ushered in Professor Manelli, Dr. and Kyria Paschali, and Andriotti following in their footsteps; also, a few moments afterwards, Roxane Delamana, with her little girl, who had been brought to play with Anthi. The two children trotted off, hand in hand, Triantafyllia brought in tea, and all stood about with cups in their hands and plunged into politics. The new Minister Lavano was talked of by many as a man with not sufficient experience for the position.

"For me," said Zoe, "since Venizelos approves of him, that is sufficient."

Costa turned round. "Does the 'great Cretan' inspire you with such entire confidence in his judgment?"

"Such confidence," said Zoe, "that I sometimes feel inclined to ask to be presented to the King, so that I might repeat to him the words that Catherine de Vaucelles said to Louis XI about his great Constable: 'Sire, a man has come to Court'!"

"What a stanch champion!" said Costa with a little smile. "I could wish for no better if ever my enemies attacked me."

Metro was just passing by with a plate in his hand, and Costa caught him by the arm.

"Look here, I want to speak to you. Come here, near the window." And he drew him toward the empty end of the room.

In the mean while Smaragda Paschali, who abhorred politics and abstract questions in general, was striving to bring a personal note into the conversation; she was sitting beside Aristidi Manelli.

"Tell me," she asked him, "this new Minister Lavano — where does he hail from? Of what sort of family is he?"

"Of an excellent one, my dear lady," answered the Professor with a little uplifting of his gray mustache; "one of the old Phanariote families. He is related to the Ranos, the Kontarchis, and even distantly to the Doukas, although my niece, I believe, does not know him personally."

"Ah," remarked Smaragda Paschali, in a voice intended to be confidential, but which penetrated to the farthest corner of the room; "talking of the Doukas, I saw your brother-in-law, Michael Douka, yesterday outside the Vouli, when the members were going in. How wonderfully preserved he is! What a splendidly aristocratic-looking man! But it really is too bad of him to be so obstinate about his daughter's marriage, is it not? So terribly unrelenting?"

There was a moment of dead silence, and then Costa

moved quickly across the room to where Theodora was standing, beside Andriotti, at the tea-table.

"Yes," he said in a quick, low voice, in answer to the unspoken question; "your father is here. Metro was just going to tell you. He has not been here many days."

For the space of a few seconds Theodora kept her eyes fixed on the embroidered tablecloth, and Metro, standing absolutely still where Costa had left him, looked across the room at her with a look of sick apprehension.

But he need not have feared.

There had been a momentary shiver, a tight pressure of the lips, a firmer grasp of the plate she was holding, lest it should fall from the hands which had trembled slightly, but Theodora Douka had been born and bred in a world where scenes were unknown. People rejoiced or grieved, inherited a fortune or lost one, but they seldom showed the world what they were feeling; so she went on talking to Andriotti about his great triumph at the recent parliamentary elections, and pressed on Miss Burney the scones which had been made especially for her.

CHAPTER XXII

It was two or three days later, just as Costa Manelli had sat down under the awning at Zacharatos's, and rapped on the little round table for his afternoon coffee, that Monsieur Arnoux happened to be passing by at a quick pace.

"Monsieur Arnoux! Monsieur Arnoux! Are you in so great a hurry?"

Monsieur Arnoux stopped short, looked round, and seeing who it was, walked up to the table, smiling.

"But no, my friend. It is a habit; that is all. Walking fast is my only exercise and at my age one must not get too stout."

"Sit down, then! I shall be very glad of your company. Two coffees!" he said, as the waiter came up to them. "How do you take yours, Monsieur Arnoux?"

"Moderate, thank you," answered the old man as he seated himself.

"One moderate," Costa ordered, "and one rather bitter." Then, as the man went off, he asked, "Have you been walking far?"

"Not to-day; I was at our Legation to see the minister about something."

"Monsieur de Lancelles is a cousin of yours, I heard some one say."

"There is a connection on my mother's side," answered Monsieur Arnoux. "Have you seen Metro?" he asked.

"Not to-day; but I was with him at the Museum all yesterday afternoon, and they dined at our house last night."

"There has been no word, no sign from his father-in-law yet?"

Costa shrugged his shoulders: "Nor will there be."

Monsieur Arnoux leaned forward. "Can you tell me, my friend, why Monsieur Douka came here to Athens, then? However indifferent he may feel, it can but be disagreeable to have every one watching him and calculating, will he, or will he not, be reconciled to his daughter. And I have often heard that Athens itself has no attractions for him?"

Costa pushed Monsieur Arnoux's cup toward him, tasted his own, put it down again, and in his turn bent forward and spoke in a lower voice.

"You heard my father say on Sunday that this new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lavano, is related to the Douka family?"

"Well?"

"Well, the various Phanariote families, you must know, hold very much together, and doubly so when related."

"Well, and after that?"

"And after that, my dear Monsieur Arnoux, need I tell you that if any of our Legations abroad happen to be vacant it is more or less on the Minister for Foreign Affairs that the duty of appointing a new representative devolves!"

"Ah — !" said Monsieur Arnoux; a long-drawn-out "A-a-a-ah" of comprehension; "and so that is it? He is always pursuing the same object then, monsieur your uncle; and if in the pursuance of this aim it is necessary that he should augment the grief of his daughter, whom he persists in not recognizing, by staying in the same town, that is a bagatelle for him? That does not matter to him at all, then?"

"Not in the very slightest, I assure you," answered Costa.

"But this is brutal selfishness!"

"No, not at all, I assure you; there is nothing brutal

about my uncle. His is the most perfectly mannered, sweet-spoken selfishness you ever met. And remember, I have lived in the same house with him for years. Never once have I heard him address a hasty, abrupt, or unconsidered word to any one, high or low. Never once, whatever the provocation, have I known him to lose his temper to an offender — or to forgive the offense. He was always perfectly just to those in his employ, very considerate, and even generous to those who pleased him, and absolutely merciless to those who displeased him. The system certainly weeded out incapables, and made for the best possible results, whether among the secretaries and attachés of the Legation, or among the servants of his household: I never knew a better served man, nor one more feared. It was pure selfishness, but selfishness brought to a fine art and so perfect in execution that it was interesting to watch."

"And with his daughter?"

"Ah, that was different. He was, mind you, *just* as selfish in his relations with her as with any outsider, — more so, in that she was his daughter, — but he was so damnably clever about it that no young girl, especially caring for him as Theodora did, would ever have discovered it. To begin with, he trained her to care for him from a small child."

Monsieur Arnoux pushed his saucer aside. "But surely, my friend, caring for some one is — "

"I tell you, he *trained* her, as you train a clever dog to tricks. He soon divined the emotional temperament my cousin had inherited from her mother, the need she would always have of devoting herself to some one, or something, and her great power of idealization, and he determined to become for her that ideal and that object of devotion. From the time she was old enough to share his life, he courted her with the poetic, chivalrous ways of a lover of Romance. He never forgot her slightest

expressed wish; he made her birthdays and name-days delightful, well-thought-out festivals that the diplomatic circles of Vienna and London remember to this day. He consulted her on all subjects she could understand, accepting her opinion when it happened to be the same as his own with a deference that could not but turn the head of any young girl, and when it differed, bringing her round to his way of thinking with a dexterity that flattered her sense of quick comprehension. He insisted on every one treating her as the absolute mistress of the house, he included her with graceful tact in all conversations. He had taught her to help him in his work, and when she learned with a quick, bright intelligence, he profited by her help often beyond her strength, but at the same time with such flattering appreciation that she would have died before owning that she was tired. He was constantly bringing flowers for her rooms, and never returned from any absence without some small gift very carefully chosen in accordance with his and her personality."

"And now," exclaimed Monsieur Arnoux; "now, is it possible, then, that this well-cherished daughter should not count any more with him? Was it such an unpardonable crime that she chose to marry a man of whom all scientific Europe has heard — a man who owes everything to his own great intelligence? Because she has done this, is she to disappear out of his life entirely, completely? So — *pouf!* — as I blow this speck of dust from my sleeve?"

"Yes; since she once disregarded his wishes, just as completely."

"Well, I tell you, then, that monsieur your uncle, that this exquisite, courteous gentleman, sickens me more than if he were a common, brutal man who sometimes beat his daughter, but who had heart enough to miss her a little when he lost her!"

"And I," said Costa, "am entirely of your way of feeling."

Just then Andriotti strolled up with Vanoussaki the journalist, and sat down beside them.

"What is the news this evening?" asked Costa.

"Nothing particular," said Andriotti; "only that — "

"That what?" asked Costa, as he paused.

"That the Turks, my friend, are up to their old games," supplemented Vanoussaki. "Every day we hear of fresh persecutions and fresh outrages in Macedonia. The cup is getting too full, you know, and one of these days it will brim over."

"And then?"

"And then there will probably be an end of this peaceful, 'irreproachable attitude' of ours, which the Great Powers are so united in praising."

"I hope not," said Costa very gravely.

"Why on earth not?"

"In the first place, because for me the word 'war' alone is as if you spoke of witchcraft, of the Inquisition, of a thing which should have long since been condemned as absolutely monstrous, and against all civilization."

Monsieur Arnoux shook his head. "I was in Paris in 1870, — you were not born then, — it was terrible, a time of horror never to be forgotten; but, nevertheless, my friend, there is a something that one cannot always explain, a wave of devotion to a common cause, of oblivion of petty personal interests, of courage, of heroic deeds accomplished with perfect simplicity — "

"Yes," said Vanoussaki; "it is so. I was in Crete in 1897, and I know. Andriotti, what do you say?"

"I never saw a war," said the new member thoughtfully; "I can scarcely say; but I think there are wars and wars. You said," he added, turning to Manelli, "that in the first place the thought of war was detestable to you; what were you going to put 'in the second place'?"

Manelli smiled. "In the second place," he said, "we are not ready for it."

Andriotti turned round and beckoned to the waiter. "Perhaps," he said, "not so unready as you think."

In the early part of that same afternoon, Theodora was sitting by the open window, newspaper in hand, waiting until it should be time to start on a round of return visits which she hoped would be the last of the season. She marked with a red pencil, for Metro, who had been too busy to read the papers in the morning, a short article which spoke in high praise of Andriotti's first speech in Parliament, and she frowned at the designation, "A new acolyte at the Prime Minister's shrine," applied to him by one of the members of the Opposition.

She liked Andriotti; he was a brilliantly intelligent man, of almost quixotic integrity, and moreover had always been a good friend of Metro's, and what nettled her was the inept injustice of the gibe. Andriotti never had been and never would be the blind follower of any man. If he was one of the warmest supporters of the Prime Minister, it was most certainly because he considered that the country had need of the leadership of just such a man.

Suddenly there was a sharp ring at the outer bell.

The newspaper fluttered on to the carpet, and Theodora sat motionless listening with her hands outstretched as though the newspaper were still between them. She heard the door opened from above, and then a brief colloquy over the stairs. When the glass door was closed again, she called out: —

"Triantafyllia!"

"Yes, Kyria."

"Who was it?"

The girl pushed open the door of the sitting-room.

"It was a gentleman, Kyria."

"A gentleman! What gentleman?"

"I do not know, Kyria; he wanted the master."

"What kind of gentleman?"

"A young gentleman; it was about some papers; he said he would come again this evening."

"Ah, — all right. Remember to tell your master when he comes in." And she picked up the fallen newspaper.

Since the Sunday when she had heard of her father's presence in Athens, Theodora had never spoken of it. Metro, when they had been left alone, had made an embarrassed allusion to the subject, but she had shivered a little and stopped him. "No, please, Metro; no, — not now." But he, whom nothing escaped when it concerned Theodora, had noted, ever since that evening, the strained attention, the start at every firm step or long stride on the pavement outside, the constant question at every ring at the door, the nervous tossing over of letters and notes; and it hurt him to see how at every chance stopping of a carriage, she would put up her hand as when one implores silence in order to hear better, and then resume the interrupted talk with a far-away look in her eyes. But since she wished it, he kept silence. Once only, when he happened to be alone with Costa, a sentence escaped him: "It is a thing that will never penetrate into my brain; he, her father, could make her happy; and he will not. He — will — not!"

Theodora glanced at one or two other things in the newspaper and then she folded it across and put it on a little table. Through the open door came the sound of a child's voice; a low, monotonous drone, not like Anthi's usual bright chatter, almost as though she were reciting something. A moment afterwards there was a patter of little feet across the hall, and Anthi, ready dressed for her walk, ran in carrying her favorite doll, also in outdoor costume.

Theodora lifted the child, doll and all, on to her knees,

and held her rather closely. "What has my little bit of a child been doing?"

"I was dwessing Melpomene, mamma, and Vasiliki did not help me at all. Look at her! All alone I put her hat on, and tied the wibbons of her coat."

"That was very clever of you! And what were you talking about while you dressed her?" asked Theodora, remembering the curious sound of the voice.

"It was not I who was talking; it was Melpomene."

"Ah, I see," said Theodora with unruffled seriousness.

Vasiliki appeared in the doorway, with a freshly starched apron tied round her broad waist. "Shall we go now, Kyria?"

"Yes. And if Anthi is a very good little girl and does not run in front of the carriages or cross the road alone, you may give her two little cakes with pink sugar over them with her milk when you come home; I will leave them out on the sideboard."

Anthi went off skipping, and Vasiliki followed, assuring her all the way down the stairs that she knew she was going to be a "little golden child" all that afternoon.

When Theodora was ready to start out, and while she was filling her card case, she suddenly remembered that it was Wednesday, and that it was a long time since she had been to Katharine Larcher's, who received on that day; so she put a little red mark against the name in her visiting notebook, so as to be sure to go.

She found every one out without exception, and it was not long past four o'clock when she turned upward in the direction of the Larchers' house.

There were a good many carriages and a few motor cars before the house, and when Theodora entered the first of the two sitting-rooms, she saw that they were both very full. She threaded her way through a crowd of acquaintances, stopping to exchange a word now and then, until she reached her hostess, at the farther end

of the second room. The latter, after giving her a quick handclasp, exclaimed: —

"There was some one here not a minute ago, inquiring about you."

"About me?"

An absolutely illogical little thrill of hope ran through Theodora as she asked the question.

"Yes; Lavano, the new Minister, was asking if you were likely to be here."

And the hope was drowned in a wave of equally illogical disappointment.

At that moment a tall, stout man advanced toward them from the adjoining conservatory, and Theodora recognized Lavano, the new Minister, whose portrait she had seen lately in the newspapers.

"There he is," cried Katharine Larcher. And raising her voice, "Monsieur Lavano, here is Madame Philippides, whom you wanted to see; she has just arrived."

Theodora looked perplexed. "But," she said as she bowed slightly, "I have not — "

"Madame Philippides means," said Lavano in French, "that I have not hitherto had the pleasure of being presented to her, but, nevertheless," he added, bending over Theodora's extended hand and touching it with his lips, "I have the honor of being slightly related to her."

"Yes," assented Theodora; "I have heard my — I have heard of the connection, but I am not quite sure that I can trace it."

"My mother," said Lavano, "was a Douka of the younger branch; she was first cousin to your grandfather." Then, after a slight pause, "Is Kyrios Philippides here this afternoon? I have heard so much about him that I have been looking forward to meeting him."

Theodora flushed a little, and a warmer tone came into her voice. "He is too busy to be very exact in his social duties; but I am sure that he too — "

"If you will allow me to come and pay my respects to you, one of these days, I hope I may be lucky enough to find him at home. I have been remiss, I know, but it is not long since I returned from Zante, and lately my political duties — "

"I shall be very glad if you will come," said Theodora.

And then she took the arm he offered her and went with him into the conservatory where the tea table was spread under tall palms. He got an ice for her and remained for some time by her side, talking of mutual connections, of the beauty of Zante, of Samara's last opera, and of one of Metro's less technical articles which he had read in the "Revue de Paris." Then some one spoke to him, and he excused himself, and passing from one to the other, reached the second entrance of the conservatory leading to the inner hall, where he stood for some time talking to the wife of the Belgian Minister.

Theodora saw Kyria Astriadi, a little distance away wedged in between three or four strangers, and smiling at her took a step in her direction. Just then she heard a pretty, smartly dressed woman before her, whom she knew by sight as a widow named Amalia Kastali, whom one met everywhere, discreetly pointing out Lavano to the young man by her side.

"Look, De Sabry!" she was whispering; "that is actually Lavano there, talking to the Comtesse de Ramières! Do you remember how handsome he was five or six years ago when there was all that affair with the Perarchi woman? How frightfully stout he has become! It may be permitted to put on a little weight when one arrives at the dignity of Minister, but really, 'il abuse de la permission'!"

"Do not make yourself uneasy about him, dear lady," laughed Amédée de Sabry, of the French Legation; "Venizelos will see to it that he regains his former elegance of figure."

"Venizelos? Why, what — ?"

"There is nothing so reducing, you know, as real hard work and plenty of it."

But Amalia was not listening; her eyes were fixed on the conservatory entrance.

"De Sabry, you who know everybody, who on earth is that tall, elderly man just coming in? — the one speaking to Lavano; *there's* a distinguished-looking man, if you like. But *who* is it? I am positive I have never seen him before. One could not forget him if — "

Theodora, who was standing just behind them, and to whom De Sabry had bowed a few moments ago, distinctly saw him nudge Amalia Kastali's elbow sharply. The latter started, looked at him inquiringly, and then toward the entrance again.

Theodora's eyes followed idly in the same direction. Then she put down her ice plate with a little clatter of the spoon, and stood motionless.

It was her father who was standing in the doorway.

She saw his glance sweep round the conservatory and rest on her for the space of a second; then he turned and continued speaking to the Comtesse de Ramières to whom he had just been introduced.

Theodora gazed at him, noting almost mechanically that his hair was no grayer, and his shoulders just as straight as when she had parted from him, at the Gare de Lyon, more than six years ago. In a momentary hush the sound of his voice came to her ears. Then all at once her knees ran to water and the terrible fear gripped her that her self-control would not last until she could get out of the house, that it would suddenly go to pieces.

The plants around her grew into a strange green blur before her eyes, and she felt a pulse throbbing violently in her throat.

"How hot it has become!" said De Sabry's voice beside her, apparently continuing to address Amalia

Kastali; "and what luck that this door opens right on to the garden. Would you care for a turn? No? Well, I will leave it open for a little air to penetrate in here, at all events."

Theodora heard; and as she heard she knew that De Sabry had seen her and had understood. Was there any one in Athens who did not know her story? But as she stumbled through the open glass door into the fast-darkening garden, there was no room in her mind for an instinct of gratitude nor even of vexation; the one impulse in her blind brain was to reach home that she might be alone and in the dark. Outside the gate some carriages were waiting. She tried to open the door of one, but fumbled at the handle in vain; her hands seemed to have lost their sense of touch.

The driver jumped down from his seat. "What do you want, Kyria? I am waiting for a lady."

"Take me to my house."

"Where is it, your house?"

She muttered the address, and the man said: "I cannot hear what you say."

Then she shouted it at him.

He drove very fast, and Theodora sat crouching far back in one corner, with both hands pressed tightly to her lips. When he stopped at her door he jumped down and prepared to ring.

"No!" she cried; "No! No! Don't ring the bell! I have a key."

He looked at her rather curiously and taking the key from her hand opened the door for her.

"Good-night, Kyria," he said; "good appetite to you, and good sleep!"

And the habit of many years made her say, "I thank you," in a gentler voice, before she closed the door.

There was no one on the stairs, no one in the hall, only a murmur of distant voices in the kitchen. She

pushed blindly through the blue linen curtain without lifting it, pulled open her bedroom door, and once safely inside, tried to lock it; but her fingers could not turn the key.

She stumbled to the couch and threw her arms across the back of it, hiding her face in them, and praying in utter desperation for the first time in many years, praying to Something — to Anything —

"Only let him look at me! Only let him speak to me!"

It was long before the pent-up sobs came.

Metro found her there two hours later, asleep from exhaustion.

CHAPTER XXIII

Nasso Lara, afflicted with a rather bad cold, was sitting in his uncle's library vainly attempting to read. However, his Aunt Virginia was present, which made the task a very arduous if not impossible one. He had been in Athens for two or three days, and she had been trying to persuade him to stay longer and look after his cold. He had objected that it was nothing, and that he was obliged to return to Salamis early the next morning; he had also been unwise enough to admit that, as he had run through most of his month's pay, it would be some time before he came to town again.

So for the last half hour his Aunt Virginia had been patiently explaining to him how, were he more careful, he could live most comfortably on his pay of two hundred and twenty-five drachmæ, and how he ought to put aside out of it at least forty if not fifty drachmæ every month.

Nasso tried at first, with his unalterable sweet temper, to convince her of the great difficulty, not to say impossibility of the feat, under present-day expenses and conditions of living. It was perfectly useless; she only returned to her original arguments in what Zoe called her "God-give-me-patience-with-your-stupidity" voice.

Presently Zoe limped in, with her hat on, and Baloo following closely after her.

"Come along out, Nasso! I have been trying to write a letter, but it is too beautiful to stay in."

Nasso swung himself off the table with alacrity, leaving his open book face downward among the illustrated papers.

"I know my advice is very seldom listened to," said

their Aunt Virginia in a soft, lugubrious voice; "but I consider it will be the height of folly for Nasso to go out with the cold he has."

Zoe shrugged her shoulders. "The hot sun will do him all the good in the world."

"Yes," assented Nasso eagerly; "it always does with me; nothing like a good sun-bath you know, Aunt Virginia; it is the new system."

Zoe picked up his book and looked at it. "'The Descent of Man,' and you are more than three quarters through! Did n't I say you would devour it? You can't read many stiff books, but I knew you would appreciate Darwin's logic."

"Darwin, indeed!" snorted Aunt Virginia; "could you not have found a nicer book for your cousin; as though it could do any one any good to believe themself descended from monkeys!"

"But, Aunt Virginia," objected Nasso, "Darwin, you know, was not trying to do people 'good'; he simply gave the world the logical results of his studies and — '

"I know nothing at all about his ideas or his studies," interrupted his aunt; "so I do not pretend to argue, but I am positive it is all wicked nonsense!"

"But would all the scientific world — " began poor Nasso.

But Zoe pulled him bodily out of the room. "If you *are* coming out, come while the sun is really hot!"

When they were outside the house, she turned vehemently on him. "You always were, and always are, and always will be a 'little hollowhead'! Is there any earthly use in wasting good arguments on any one who first affirms positively that certain ideas are 'wicked nonsense' and then refuses to argue concerning the said ideas, because 'she knows nothing at all about them'?"

Nasso laughed, and then coughed violently.

"Your cold *is* pretty bad."

"Yes, I feel rather stuffy, but I'm glad you dragged me away — Look! there is Manelli on the opposite side!"

Costa was walking beside a pretty woman in half mourning, who held a big bunch of pink carnations, and who was talking to him vivaciously: he was laughing as he listened, and did not see the cousins.

"How young-looking Eleni Vathi is," remarked Nasso; "who would say she was the mother of three big boys?"

Zoe shrugged her shoulders, ever so slightly. "Yes, she does keep young."

"She is a jolly little soul, you know."

"I suppose she must be; hence the name of 'the merry widow.'"

"Oh, but — " Nasso hesitated; and then added rather lamely, "She is quite nice, you know."

"My dear boy, whoever said she was not? I have, in fact, always heard from Miss Burney, who knows her well, that she is most amusing company and quite an exemplary mother."

Nasso looked at her with a puzzled expression; after a moment, he remarked: "Come along into Dorée's and have an ice. *I* am going to treat."

"I thought you said you had nothing left?"

"There's just a remnant left; not enough to be economical with! Come along! Besides, as I'm going back to the ship to-morrow there'll be no more opportunities of spending before May. Come, Zoe!"

There was no resisting Nasso, so they called for lemon and strawberry granites with plenty of long straws, and Zoe ate a great many ice biscuits, and she let Nasso pay for all because she knew it pleased him to do it.

As they were leaving the shop, Nasso had another fit of coughing which shook him all over.

"Look here!" said Zoe. "You are not going down

to-morrow morning! *I* say it, and I don't care if the Admiral himself comes to ask for you. I am going to call that victoria from over the way, I want to go to — Polymnia Valliadi's to ask them for Sunday evening. But you will go home at once, tell Calliope to get a hot bath ready for you, and then go straight to bed. I will send up your dinner. But mind, I mean a really hot bath, where you have to let yourself down slowly into the water. Go!"

And Nasso obediently went.

On Easter Sunday, Theodora was spending the whole day at the Laras'. Metro had gone for the week end to Poros to fulfill a long-standing promise to Kyra Sophoula. He had suggested that Theodora should come with him, but she had preferred to remain in town. She felt tired, she said, after standing so much in church all the past week, and besides, it was not worth while changing all Anthi's habits just for three days. Perhaps even to herself she did not confess that she could not bear to leave Athens, even for a day.

Anthi, also, had lunched at the Laras' for the first time. Nasso, now entirely convalescent after two days spent in bed, had sat next to her at table, had cracked red eggs for her, made a wreath of little pink roses for her to wear as queen of the festival, and had surreptitiously kept a little silver dish of chocolates next to her plate the whole time, so that Anthi had thoroughly enjoyed herself. Vasiliki had taken her home before dusk, and the others were sitting in the library where Zoe had been playing for them.

Miss Burney, who always spent Easter Sunday with the Laras, was leaning back in a low chair near the open window; and Theodora had put two cushions on the floor and was sitting lower still, with her head against the arm of the chair. Nasso lay full length on a couch,

lazily puffing out his cigarette smoke into circles and watching it mount higher and higher.

"Go on, Zoe!"

"What shall I play?"

"Anything, as long as it is not the Easter Hymn. You must have played that twenty times over this morning; I heard you while I was dressing; and now again after lunch, for Anthi's benefit, another dozen or so times."

Zoe laughed. "Sometimes I get attacks of 'seasonableness.' I like the 'Christos anesti' just because in three or four bars it contains such a lot of church bells, and lighted candles, and flowers, and red eggs, and best frocks, and all sorts of Easter-y things. However, perhaps you have heard it enough for this year. Listen to this bit of Debussy; you won't understand it, but it's beautiful!"

The door opened rather suddenly and Aunt Virginia sailed into the room in all the glory of a purple silk dress reserved for Easter and festive occasions. "My dear Zoe, do you know what you forgot?"

"What?" asked Zoe, continuing to play.

"You never reminded me to return Kyria Panopoulo's visit. It was a first visit, you know, and the week was up on Wednesday. Of course I could not pay visits on the Thursday and Friday of Holy Week, but I *ought* to have gone yesterday."

"You can go next week." And Zoe came down with some rather crashing chords in the bass.

"My dear, *don't* make such a noise! How can I hear what you are saying?"

Zoe got up suddenly, closed the piano, and began putting the music away. "I said you can go next week."

"Next week is far too late."

"Then don't go at all! Better '*never* than *late*,' you know."

"My *dear* Zoe! Are you trying to see how silly you can be! You know quite well that a first visit should always be returned within the eight days."

"That was in the last century," interposed Nasso; "now life has become so crowded that a full fortnight is allowed! Don't you worry, Aunt Virginia! The lady in question will only think how young and up to date you are!"

"It is all very fine to say 'don't worry,' but it is just those little infringements of social rules which make society nowadays so lax, and it is the strict keeping of them which marks the really well-bred person. Don't you agree with me, Theodora?"

Theodora, who had not been following the little trickle of remarks very closely, started up, and answered somewhat at random. "I? Oh, I don't know; rules are not so strictly kept now, are they?"

"Naturally," said Aunt Virginia, bridling; "you are bound to agree with the young ones, who get worse and worse every day. They find all rules too irksome for them. Zoe, here, buries herself in her books and her one or two bosom friendships, and has never any time to pay her proper calls with me. As for Nasso, he never goes near his mother's relations from year's end to year's end! But they both of them saddle me with their cards. It is all that an uninteresting old aunt is good for, I suppose! I assure you, my dear Theodora, if it were not for my keeping up our social duties, not a soul would come near the house!"

Theodora did not answer; Zoe turned toward the window whistling, and Nasso buried himself in the last number of the "Illustration."

Aunt Virginia fussed about the room for a few minutes, straightened the cushions on which Nasso had been lying, pulled one chair forward, pushed a frame back, and at last, with some murmur of seeing whether Yanni

had sufficient glasses out for the evening, she left the room.

Zoe flung herself down beside Miss Burney. "Does n't it make you tired to hear the unimportant things made paramount! Now, *is* life long enough to worry over a retarded visit? As if it could possibly matter to any one whether Aunt Virginia goes or does not go to see her!"

"*She* certainly thinks it does; and really, my dear child, you are getting far too snappy with your aunt."

Nasso interposed before Zoe could reply. "When she was quite a little child," he said, "what do you think was her greatest ambition? To have a sponge soaked in castor oil; yes, castor oil, and to thrust it into poor Aunt Virginia's mouth every time she began to talk!"

"It 's quite true," laughed Zoe; "I cannot tell you the wild longing I had to realize that dream."

"I remember once," said Nasso, "the despair of the unattainable overwhelmed her, and she fell flat on the floor, and beat her feet on the boards, sobbing, 'I shall never manage it! Never! *Never!*'"

Miss Burney laughed. "You were a weird child!"

"Perhaps I was. But though I don't fall flat on the floor now, I have *never* quite got over that disappointment, and never shall."

The Manellis had been asked to spend the evening at the Laras', also two or three employees of the Attic Bank who were known to have no people of their own in Athens, and some distant cousins whom Zoe very rarely saw. Andrea Lara was not a very demonstrative man, but he had the strong family feeling of most Greeks and he liked to have his own relations about him on such times as New Year and Easter. There were two bridge tables in the dining-room, and Nasso sang untiringly to the non-players in the library. Costa sought out Theodora and passed his arm through hers.

"Listen to me!" he said; "and do not look startled whatever I say. No, nobody is noticing us. My father met yours last night at the Club." He felt her arm tremble and pressed it closer. "You know my father goes there very rarely, but last night he had an appointment with some one, and the first person he saw in the reading-room was my uncle."

"Did he — ?"

"Wait a moment! My father, you understand, did not intend to make the slightest advance, but it seems yours came up at once with outstretched hand and was most amiable."

"What did they talk about?"

"Of nothing in particular; of the winds and the waves. There were various other men present."

"He did not ask — ?"

"My father says he asked about no one specially by name, so as, I suppose, to make no exceptions, but simply expressed the hope that all the family was well. Not a word was exchanged that all the world might not have heard; but my father was glad; he says it will make things easier in future, if — "

Theodora turned round sharply. "If — if what?"

As she turned her elbow struck the pile of music and threw it off the piano. There was a rain of loose leaves over the floor. Nasso, Costa, and two or three other men hurried forward and began picking them up.

"Why, Nasso!" cried Zoe as the pieces were handed to her; "here is this song for which I have been searching for months; the one that I borrowed for you from Elmina Pavlides; at last I wrote to Paris for a new copy, and here you had it all the time inside your music which was down at the ship! It is *too* bad of you to carry it off like that."

"I never took it, nor sang it either; it's a horrid, slushy, sugary kind of song."

"Then how did it get among your music?"

"My dear Zoe, what a question! How do things always get mixed up with other things, where one never put them? It's just their natural maliciousness."

Zoe put the recovered song into one of the drawers of the music cabinet. "I do wish you would hurry up and marry, Nasso! And that your wife should be of the painfully tidy type of woman; you require her!"

Nasso turned to the others, laughing. "Is n't she wicked? Well, if this paragon of tidiness is also a paragon of management and can keep house on nothing a month, and save a little out of it for extras, I'll marry her tomorrow, Zoe. Where does she live?"

"How do you know," said Zoe lightly, "that she may not be very rich herself?"

Nasso shook his curly head. "That would be the wrong way about."

"Why?"

"Do you see me presenting myself to some rich would-be bride, and saying to her, 'I'm a very likely sort of young man, healthy, and decently good-tempered; won't you please feed and dress and keep me, for the rest of our lives'?"

"Don't talk rubbish!" said Zoe sharply. "As if you might not fall in love with a girl, not because, but in spite, of her money?"

"Yes," chimed in Theodora; "such accidents do happen, you know."

"Then you just go on as if they did n't. You women don't understand; do they, Manelli?"

Costa looked at him with a little smile of comprehension.

"My dear fellow, for me, men are divided into two kinds; the decent ones, who, being poor themselves, steer clear of big fortunes, and the other kind — who don't."

There was a moment's silence, and then Zoe spoke in rather a tense voice. "Well, if I cared for a man, I would marry him even if he had a million, and I had not a penny myself. Once *I* knew that I was marrying the man and not his fortune, I should not care a pin what the world might say."

"Therein lies the difference, you see," said Costa dryly; "I should."

"Then," she cried hotly, "I tell you that if you refused to marry the woman you loved, just because you might be suspected of self-interest, you would be — " She stopped short.

"A coward, you mean; well, some people might call it so. I should say that it required a certain amount of courage."

There was an awkward pause of a few seconds, and then Nasso broke in, laughing: "Talking of rich brides, Zoe, do you remember that fat little dark girl in the Zappion Gardens, the daughter of old Malvani from Alexandria, and our marriage ceremony under the laurel bush, with Nico Tassiades as a priest? What a pity she did not wait for me!"

Zoe hesitated for the fraction of a second, and then caught the ball of conversation on the rebound.

"Yes; I believe that when she grew up she had the bad taste to prefer one of those equally rich Peropoulos to you. And do you remember the big packet of Turkish sweets that she brought to you one day, as a love offering?"

"Don't I? Ottilie caught me working my way steadily through them, and took them away."

Zoe turned to the others, laughing. "But he forgets the best of all. How, when Ottilie wanted to offer some sweets to her friends, the other nurses, he stood up and shouted, 'You can eat them if you like, but I've licked every one of them first!'"

"Oh, the little pig!" cried Miss Burney.

"What I envy most," said Theodora, "is that you two have so many of the 'Oh-do-you-remembers' together."

"Yes," assented Zoe, "there is a big stock of those, to last us until we are quite old people."

"Speak for yourself," said Nasso; "I don't think I want to grow old; I think I shall choose to fall on the field of glory in the bloom of youth!"

"Only that the Great Powers who so carefully watch over Greece," remarked one of the young Lara cousins, "will not allow you any field of glory to fall in!"

"I'm afraid they won't, worse luck to them," said Nasso, "and that I shall end my days a white-haired drawing-room admiral, my chest covered with medals, which I shall have done nothing to deserve."

"And are you not glad of it?" asked Costa.

"Glad?"

"Yes, glad. Would you plunge your country into the unspeakable horrors of war, for the sake — "

Zoe sprang forward. "For the sake of freeing the thousands of Greeks still under Turkish rule, for the sake of a larger and happier Greece? — Of course he would, and every one would, who is proud of his nationality. Racial existence and freedom are values to be won at any cost! There are wars and wars!"

"No!" answered Costa in a grave voice; "there are no good wars! Those who think so are the comfortable stay-at-home patriots who have not been to see; those who feel a thrill at the sight of a regiment marching with flying colors and brave music. I have felt it myself other times, — call it atavism if you will, or the old fighting, primitive man so hard to convince, so illogical always. But now, that same regiment makes me think of herds of cattle driven along the highroad by a butcher — driven to the slaughter house. You, the stay-at-home, the woman, the child, or the old man, you smile at those

who are marching away, you wave your hand, you cry, 'Good luck to you and a safe return!' and you march for a few yards in time to their music. But for them the music will cease after a while, and the yards will become miles, and they will march on and on, day after day, and very often night after night, without rest, all thought blotted out but the one of sleep; they will be drenched by the rain, and burned by the sun, and lie down in the mud, and live like beasts in the midst of filth and vermin. And worse still, once the ordinary barriers of law and order are thrown down, many of these men will be turned into maddened brutes. Those who know — officers — have told me. A new revolver is tried on a human shadow at a window, or passing dogs are spitted on the point of a bayonet. Just for nothing: for a joke."

He paused a moment and continued in a calmer voice: "A revolution, an uprising to throw off a foreign yoke, that is different; that is cruel necessity; but war — a voluntary war — should never be unavoidable, it seems to me. If it is forced on us, then I hope we should all know how to do our duty as men, but let us do nothing to bring it on our country. Greece has been sufficiently tried."

"Then," said Zoe's father, who had come up while Costa was speaking, "you approve of our famous 'irreproachable attitude' which the Powers are so united in praising; of this ultra-Christian, non-resenting attitude to all the aggressions of Turkey?"

"No," said Costa slowly; "'approve' is not the word; but I think it our duty to continue in it. 'Better bear those ills we have, than fly to others that we know not of.' The Powers have undertaken to lighten the burden of the Macedonians and the Epirotes; we must hope that they will know how to force the Turks to accept the reforms which they think necessary."

"And what of us?" asked Zoe; "what is to be our

future after a long continuing in this wise and humble attitude?"

"Oh, I have nothing very brilliant to predict. We shall, I suppose, go on stewing in our own scanty juice. What can we do, poor as we are, and held down on all sides? It is no use expecting miracles. Greece has unfortunately been made too small, and small she will remain. Let us be content to make the most of her resources and not try to rebel against those who could crush rebellion in a day by three or four of their big ships outside Piræus. Resignation is a difficult virtue to practice, but, at any rate, safety lies that way, safety from the blindly stupid, useless waste of war."

"Safety!" And there was ringing contempt in Zoe's voice as she cried out the word. "Safety! I tell you that one day we shall fling safety to the four winds, and our 'irreproachable attitude' in the faces of the Powers! We shall welcome friends and allies if we can find them, but if we cannot, we shall start out alone, every able-bodied man of us, yes, and old men and boys as well, to give freedom to other Greeks, and to carve out a bigger and happier country for ourselves. No one will hang back, not one! — from the King to the humblest peasant of the poorest province!"

"Even granting that we were allowed to move," said Costa, "you expect an ignorant peasant, a hand-to-mouth laborer, one who, poor wretch, does not even disguise the fact that the death of the old, or the invalided, or incapables, is a relief to him, — to die joyfully for the glory of an enlarged boundary line — for a bigger map!"

"Yes, I do! Because it will be explained to him — and they are not hard of understanding, our peasants — that a bigger country means more bread and more land for all, and an easier and broader life for his children after him. And that is only the motive of self-interest;

they will come from another motive also — to set their brothers free! For that motive the Greek will brave everything, even all the horrors of which you spoke. There will be war, but you will see *what* a war! There will be great sacrifices, but all willing ones; there will be death, but glorious death! You talk of the peasant and the hand-to-mouth laborer! You will see that they will leave their fields untilled, and they will come running as soon as they are called! They will close their shops, and they will come! The poor emigrants will flock back from America, even those who are not called to come; the rich young men who have been brought up abroad and who can scarcely speak their own language will hear the call of the blood, and will come to their country which they have never seen, to fight for her! I tell you even the thieves in prison will beg to be let out to fight! And all these together will carve out a Greece that none of you have even imagined!"

With flashing eyes and dilated nostrils she looked straight at Costa. He met her glance for a moment, and then his eyes dropped.

"I envy you your power of foretelling the future; but all the same I cannot quite see from where you gather your rosy anticipations; on what you base, I will not say the probability of what you predict, but even its possibility."

"I base it on nothing; I feel it."

Costa smiled slightly. "Pardon me, but you can scarcely dismiss a debatable point on that score, however strong the individual feeling. The most superficial observance of past facts, the simplest logic, will tell you that even were all this wonder-working enthusiasm available, it would never be allowed free play."

"I don't care what logic tells me."

"That's right, Zoe," interrupted Nasso; "don't you worry about the stupid thing!"

"There are some things that cannot be explained by logic," she continued, disdaining the interruption; "I believe with all my heart that my Greece will become real some day, and that yours will not."

"Not having the gift of prophecy myself, I cannot attempt to say what the Greece of a century hence will be like, but that if the balance of power among the greater nations remains unchanged it will be even smaller and more insignificant than to-day, I feel convinced."

"And what — " cried Zoe — "what of the turning of the road? How can you tell what may meet us round the very first corner?"

Costa laughed lightly. "How delightful are the enthusiasms of youth!"

Professor Manelli, who had come up attracted by the discussion, frowned a little.

"Nevertheless, on this point, I agree with 'youth.' My experience has taught me that one must take into consideration the 'turning of the road' and what it may disclose. The Unknown Power is a great scene-shifter. Sometimes, when you follow a case retrospectively you see that the vitality of a great cause sprang up in the very moment when it was most despaired of."

"My dear father, it is not the vitality of our cause that I deny; but unfortunately I cannot shut my eyes to sad facts. We want to do great things, but to reverse the celebrated English Jingo song, though we may 'want to fight' we have neither the 'money' nor enough 'ships' nor the right kind of 'men.' The heroes of 1821 are all dead and buried!"

Nasso shook his head. "I wish to goodness he were wrong, but I am afraid Costa is right! How are we to work wonders with no material, with no men at the helm?"

"There is one man, at any rate!" cried Zoe.

"Who?"

"Venizelos!"

"That man from Crete?"

"Exactly; that man from Crete! I was out with father in the Square, the day that he was first elected, and I heard his speech."

"Well?"

"I never forgot it, and I never shall."

"Words are cheap."

"These were not; every one was weighed and counted. Then another day, a few months ago, I met him at the Papastathis'. He did not know me, of course. There were lots of people there, and at one moment, in one of the various groups, there was the usual sort of talk about our going to the dogs, etc., etc., and one woman — of those, you know, who love to bury people and nations before they are dead — said something about our going downhill so fast, and I don't know what made the idea come to me just then, but I said that according to history many nations went up and down like the sleds on the 'montagnes russes,' and that sometimes the very velocity of their descent served to carry them triumphantly up the opposite slope. Some people laughed, and one old lady asked Venizelos, 'What do *you* say about our chances?' He looked at me — really looked — and said, with a queer little smile in his beard, 'I quite agree with the young lady who has just spoken.' I never felt so proud before in all my life; *never!*"

There was a general laugh.

"He agreed with you!" cried Nasso; "then of *course* he must be a great man; who can doubt it?"

"All the same," said Costa, "if your Venizelos means to give an upward push to the sled in our lifetime, he must hurry."

Zoe nodded her head. "He *is* hurrying — slowly."

Aunt Virginia appeared in the doorway between the two rooms.

"Will you not all come into the dining room?" she asked; "come and have some ices."

As they were crossing the hall, Costa was walking beside Zoe.

"I — I — hope I did not say anything to vex you."

She looked up at him a little curiously; it was most unlike Costa to stammer over a sentence.

"Oh, no; why should you? I quite admit that my arguments, or prophecies if you like, have no logical basis; but somehow I firmly believe they will be realized some day and that we shall live to see it."

"May the 'God of Battles' grant it! He is the correct one to invoke, is he not?"

"Do you know Swinburne's 'Mater triumphalis'?" she asked suddenly.

He nodded.

"Well, these two lines to Liberty embody all I feel, and want to say: —

> "'Thou tarriest, and I have not said thou art not,
> Nor all thy night long have denied thy day!'"

"Neither do I deny it," said Costa, lowering his voice.

"Listen," she said very seriously. "Will you promise me one thing? If — no, *when* the great day arrives, will you come to me and say, 'You were right'?"

"That does not need a promise; I should come in any case."

"I beg your pardon," she said; "of course you — will."

CHAPTER XXIV

Zoe was driving down the Academy Road toward the Hall of the Archæological Society, where Metro was to lecture on some coins lately unearthed in Egypt, when just after passing the War Ministry she overtook her father, who first stared at her, and then made a sign to the coachman to stop.

"You are out! You have been out long?"

"I? Yes. I was at Miss Burney's, and I am going on to the Archæological Society; Metro is to speak at five. Why do you ask?"

"Because I was sure you were at home. Theodora is there."

"Theodora!" echoed Zoe in astonishment.

"Yes, listen!" And he folded his arms on the carriage door and put his head close to hers, lowering his voice as he did so. "I was leaving the house about half an hour ago, when I saw Theodora on the opposite side of the pavement; she was walking quickly and did not look across the road. Suddenly, I saw Douka with two other men coming from the opposite direction. There are no side streets there, and he was bound to come face to face with his daughter."

Zoe frowned and clenched her hands tightly. "What happened?"

"Nothing. He passed on, perfectly unconcerned; talking gayly to his companions without a single look; or rather, without even giving one the impression that he avoided looking her way."

"And she?"

"She did not stop, though her pace slackened, nor

did she look up, but after the three men had passed, she seemed somehow to have shrunk. I am not an imaginative man, as you know, but I assure you she positively looked smaller to me. I was going to pass on, of course, but she looked up in a dazed kind of way and saw me. She did not say, 'Good-afternoon' or anything, only just left her hand in mine and asked, 'Is Zoe in?' I said I did not know, but that we could find out. So we retraced our steps, rang the bell, and asked Yanni; and he said yes, you were upstairs in your room, so Theodora went straight up. I found the gardener there in the front and began to tell him about transplanting those lilies, and as I must have stayed at least a quarter of an hour in the garden and did not see her come down again, naturally I concluded you were in the house."

"Yanni made a mistake; he did not see me go out. But I will go back now; she may be still there."

Andrea Lara looked at his watch. "It is not five minutes since I left the house; yes, go! She looked — she looked — "

"I know," said Zoe; "I am going back at once."

She let herself in with her key and mounted the broad staircase as quickly as she could, holding on to the balustrade and pulling herself up from one step to another.

Her bedroom was a large one on the second floor looking on to the garden. She found Theodora sitting in one corner of a roomy old sofa, her eyes fixed on the floor, and a white shawl thrown over her shoulders. She looked up when Zoe's halting steps came close to her, but did not seem surprised to see her, nor did she greet her in any way; she only said: "I was going to Metro's lecture — and afterwards I — I — had not the courage, so I came here. The weather is a little cooler, I think; I don't know; perhaps I was tired; I was walking too fast; so I asked your maid for a shawl. You don't mind, do you?"

There was something dull and toneless in her voice that hurt Zoe almost with a physical pain. She stooped over her, settling the cushions at her back, and setting her teeth resolutely, to keep back a burst of pitying tears. However, she controlled herself, and there was only a slight tremor in her voice as she asked: —

"Will you stay with me? Shall I send word to Metro that you are here?"

"No, oh, no! It will only disturb him. There will be so many at the lecture he will not know; I always sit at the back."

She took hold of Zoe's hand and pressed it tightly against her cheek as though for the feel of the human contact.

"Do you know my father passed quite close to me, just now, with two strangers, and he did not look at me, Zoe! He did not want to look. If only he could guess! But it is my fault; I never let him understand all he was to me. I suppose I was born with an unfortunate manner, but if he only dreamt how I suffer, he would forget his pride and his — his anger."

Zoe kept perfectly silent. Theodora had never said as much to her before; she feared that a single ill-timed question or remark might throw her back into silence, and she knew that it was good for her to speak. Presently Theodora began again, her eyes fixed on the distant trees in the garden.

"We were never like ordinary father and child; he always wanted me near him, even when I was quite a little thing. And whenever we traveled about, as soon as we arrived in any big town, he would have me dressed in my nicest things and take me out at once with him. And oh, Zoe, so courteous always — even when I was a troublesome schoolgirl and the governesses and masters appealed to him in despair. All he said to me, once, when I had been too impatient with a stolid German

governess, was, 'Would it not be as well, my dear, not to implant doubts into this worthy lady's mind as to the perfect equanimity of the Douka manners, even when tried?' When he was so ill with lumbago, — and you know what men are generally when they have to bear pain, — even then, he was so patient, so perfectly sweet-tempered; he would only say, 'Do not be away from the room too long, little daughter, no one but you can make me comfortable!' Oh!" she cried with a break in her voice, "who takes care of him now?"

And she stopped suddenly, and sat there, with her elbows on the arm of the sofa, and her fingers tightly pressed upon her eyeballs.

There was silence in the room for some minutes. Baloo, who was stretched on his side beside the open window, gave a little far-away bark in his sleep. Zoe got up from the sofa, and busied herself with taking off her hat and smoothing her hair at the distant toilet table.

After a few moments Theodora called to her.

"Come back, Zoe! Come and sit near me!"

Zoe did not speak; she opened and shut a drawer, moved a silver box, and straightened the lace of the toilet cover.

"Come here, Zoe; I want you."

She came at last, and Theodora saw that her eyes were full of tears. She bent over and kissed her.

"Thank you, dear; it is good of you to care."

"Don't!" said Zoe fiercely; "don't thank me! I can't help it."

"That is still better." Then, in a broken voice, "Oh, Zoe! Zoe! Help me to bear it! It hurts so — it hurts!"

And Zoe slipped down beside her and pulled her head down to her shoulder, and held her hand tightly, and let her talk, and made all the tears come that she had been keeping back for the last month. And Theodora told her of things that she had kept from all, even from

Metro — perhaps especially from Metro. She told her of the long years of waiting, patient and hopeful at first, but at last full of the heart-sickness of deferred longing; of the times when Metro was away on scientific expeditions and she could throw off the cloak of assumed cheerfulness; of the nights spent crouching before the fire in her bedroom with an old cushion clasped in her arms, whose once soft velvet had become stiff with many tears.

Suddenly she disengaged herself from Zoe's arms and stood up, pressing her hands on either side of her face.

"I do not know what I am saying! What will you think? That my life is a hard one? That I am ungrateful for all I have? But you know, Zoe, you know! No wife could be more tenderly cared for! Only sometimes it seems so hard; so many who care less have both, husband *and* parents! Why should it not be so with me? Ah, if he only knew! If he only knew!"

And she began pacing backward and forward, from one end of the big room to the other.

After a little Zoe made her sit down by the open window where the cooler evening breeze could blow on her heated face, and tried to talk of other things; of a book she was reading, and of the great clump of lilies that her father was going to have planted just there, where she pointed, under the two great round pines, and little by little the influence of the hour and of the young girl's quiet talk, of the very restfulness of the room itself, made themselves felt.

When Theodora was leaving, she looked back a moment.

"You won't let me thank you, I know; but let me tell you what good you have done me; you — and your room."

And for a long time afterwards the room and its great open windows with the waving branches rustling and swaying about their frames, remained in her memory as a cool green oasis in a desert of burning pain.

When Theodora reached home she found Triantafyllia

standing at the open street door, having just taken the "Hestia" from the newsboy, who was running on up the street shouting his evening papers.

"Is your master in?"

"He is in, Kyria; twice has he asked whether you had not returned."

Theodora toiled wearily up the many stairs. She became aware of a dull, aching pain down the bone of her thigh; she remembered vaguely that it had been there for some time, but the mounting of each step accentuated the pain. It was early for Metro to be in. Then she remembered that he was leaving the next day for Argos, on a short expedition with Tarnier and Chabert; and just then the prospect of a valise to pack for him assumed the proportions of a stupendous task.

"Theodora! Is it you?"

The question came, even before she had closed the door of the landing; and before she could answer, Metro flung open his study door and striding forward threw his arms round her. For a moment she hid her face against his shoulder; if she might only stay there silent, for a long, long time! But she lifted her face up.

"I am afraid you have been anxious, not seeing me at the lecture, but —"

"No, no, it does not matter, there were many people. Come in! Come in here! I want you!"

And his deep voice trembled with suppressed excitement. She followed him, scarcely curious, but wondering a little. In the study he put his arms once more round her, and looked into her eyes.

"My wife, I bring you news. Who do you think was at my lecture?"

"At your lecture," she repeated, not understanding; "the King, perhaps, or some of the princes?"

"Prince Nicholas was there, but I was not thinking of him; who else do you think was there?"

He felt her tremble a little.

"Not — ?"

"Yes," he said very gently; "your father was there in the second row."

She looked up with a dazed expression.

"My father! But I — I — met him out."

"He must have been coming there. But — to you he did not speak, did he?"

"Metro!"

The word was a cry rather than an exclamation.

He stooped and kissed her eyes. "Yes; he spoke to me. I told you I had brought you news — great news. Come and sit here and let me tell you."

Half carrying, half leading her, he placed her on the divan.

"It was after the lecture was over; many people had gone. I was standing by the long table, wrapping up the coins I had been showing when Artemios, the Rector of the University, came up with some one. I was stooping and I did not see who it was at once. 'Professor Philippides,' he said, 'Kyrios Douka wishes to know you.' And your father at once held out his hand smiling, and began to talk."

"What did he say, exactly, please?"

"Well, as far as I remember, — you understand, I was taken by surprise, — he said, 'I cannot leave the hall, my dear Professor, without thanking you for your most interesting lecture.' And then he went on with some compliments, that he had always been told that I spoke well, but had not expected so much pleasure, and such kind of things."

Theodora put up her hand. "Did he not ask — ?"

"No," answered Metro hurriedly; "no, he did not say anything private, anything intimate; you see there were others there; but it is a beginning, my Theodora, and you know the beginning is the half of everything.

Besides, wait! I have more to tell you. When he — your father — had spoken a little and had asked to look closer at the coins, he gave me his hand once more and left with two others who were with him, and at the door as I came out there was your Uncle Aristidi, and he had seen all that had happened, and as we left the hall together, he told me that now, as things are, he has decided to speak to your father."

"To speak about me?"

"Yes, not to-morrow, as he — your father — is leaving Athens for three days, but as soon as he returns he will go to him. Your uncle thinks, in fact he feels almost sure, that your father wishes now that all should be well between you, but that perhaps after so long it is a little awkward, and that to-day he meant us to understand —"

Theodora looked doubtful. "And yet, that is not like my father; what he wanted, he did; always."

"Ah, but you cannot tell; this is so different a matter, this touches him so closely." Then suddenly he burst out: "My child! My child! Tell me you are happy! Tell it me with your own lips! Tell me that I brought you good news!"

She threw her arms round his neck and pulled his face down to hers.

"So happy! So happy, my Metro, that I cannot find the words to thank you."

CHAPTER XXV

During the first two days of Metro's absence it seemed as though Theodora could not stay in the house. She took Anthi up for a first visit to the Acropolis, and brought her back with a very soiled frock and an armful of yellow dandelions. She carried Miss Burney off to old Phaleron, sat with her outside one of the little seaside restaurants where they ate an impossible sort of meal of bread and cheese and *loucoumia*, finishing off with fresh sea-urchins which had just been caught. She climbed over slippery rocks, searched for flat pebbles to see if she had forgotten her youthful talent for making them skim many times over the surface of the sea.

"I don't want to think," she said; "nor to sit still and wait; just to move about, and feel amused, and be talked to; tell me some Irish fairy tales, Miss Burney, 'darlint'!"

And Miss Burney ransacked her memory for old tales of pixies and banshees and leprechauns; and they did not get back to Athens until dusk. But on the third day Theodora's leg was painful. It was nothing, she said, just a touch of rheumatism; her mother had suffered from it, but much walking was disagreeable. So she sent a note to Zoe proposing that they should go together in the afternoon to one of the cinematographs, where a film of "the last days of Pompeii" was said to be particularly good, so Zoe called for her in the victoria soon after three o'clock.

The hall of the cinematograph was crowded, but Theodora and Zoe, threading their way carefully up the center in the semi-darkness, succeeded in finding two empty seats toward the front. As soon as the lights

were turned up they saw that the occupier of the next seat to Theodora was Smaragda Paschali, who greeted them with loud cries of welcome.

"Now, is not this lucky! We might have made arrangements to meet here, and have searched, and searched, and yet not have found seats together, so crowded as it is to-day!"

Theodora replied politely, and Zoe made a grimace which happily remained unseen. Smaragda Paschali proceeded to introduce her neighbor and companion as Kyria Papakatsopoulo. "The daughter-in-law of the Papakatsopoulos of the big house in University Avenue," she added, in a stage whisper, to Theodora; "but her father is a judge in Larissa, and she has received a perfect education, — music, and painting, and languages, and all, you know."

Theodora turned the conversation to the "last days of Pompeii."

"Only just the prologue is over," explained Smaragda Paschali; "it is a long film, and they began early to-day. It is all ancient, you know, and rather a mixed-up story, but some one behind said it was taken from an English novel, so you, who have doubtless read it, will be able to tell me all about it." Then her eye fell on a long feather stole, which Theodora was wearing for the first time and which had been sent to her by her Uncle Pandeli, from London. "Oh!" she cried, with a note of genuine admiration in her voice; "oh, how smart! how new! how deliciously chic and modern!" Then, picking up one end, "You do not mind if I look at it closer? I am just crazy about elegant things, you know. How originally it is made! Look at these ends of longer and straighter feathers, tied up with little bunches of ribbon!"

"That," said Theodora innocently, "is the way they wear them now."

"I know that, thank you!" exclaimed Smaragda Pas-

chali very sharply; "I *know* that. I also could have a feather stole 'the way they wear them now,' if I had a rich uncle abroad to send me the last new things, as soon as they appeared." Then, disregarding Theodora's protests, "While now!" — and her voice became deeply tragic — "I must go on wearing *this!*" indicating the short, curly-feathered boa across her knees. "Of course," she added, bridling, "they are good feathers. I know Spiro paid seventy-five drachmæ for it, but of course every year they bring out new kinds! I suppose that you do not happen to know what your uncle paid for yours?"

Theodora gasped in astonishment, but she had scarcely murmured, "No," when the lights were turned down, and all eyes were fixed on the representation of a really magnificently staged Pompeiian feast.

Happily the intervals were not long and the discussion was interrupted. They all left the hall together. Out in the daylight Smaragda Paschali gave one more look of admiration at the feather stole.

"It really is exquisite!" she murmured, and approaching Theodora as the latter was stepping into the victoria she whispered with bated breath, "I dare say that for a month or two, you will be the *only* woman in Athens to have one like it!"

As they drove off Theodora laughed. "Did you hear by the tone of her voice how supremely happy that fact ought to make me! I am afraid I don't appreciate my possessions sufficiently."

"Sometimes I think you do not," assented Zoe; but her voice did not sound amused, and Theodora turned to look at her. However, at that moment there was a meeting of tram-cars at the corner of the road, and Stathi the coachman prudently brought his horses to a standstill.

Andriotti, who happened to be crossing the street, saw them and came up to their victoria.

"Is Metro back yet?"

"No, did you want him?"

"Yes; but there is no hurry. When do you expect him?"

"Probably to-morrow, or the next day at the latest: shall I give him any message from you?"

"No, thank you. I will call one of these evenings, myself."

"Are you very busy just now in Parliament?" asked Theodora.

"Very. The sitting was not broken up until past midnight yesterday. Are you going home now?"

"Yes; come back and have tea with us, will you not?"

"I wish I could, but the President made us swear to be in our seats before six; no, I only meant to tell you that you will find Manelli at your house. I've just left him, and he said he was going to you."

"Costa?"

"Yes; and, by the way, he has just been the hero of a little street drama here in the Square; you must tease him about it!"

"Drama? How? What?"

"Oh, nothing much; but it might have been an accident. He was talking to Kyria Vathi, 'the merry widow,' when one of her boys got into the way of a small motor car and it knocked him over. It was not going fast, and the child was none the worse except for a bruise or two, but when his mother turned and saw him on the ground, the shriek she gave brought all the men racing up from Zacharatos's. Costa rushed into the middle of the road, pulled the boy out of the way, convinced her there were no bones broken, and took them home in a carriage. I helped them in, and he told me he was going on to you afterwards."

"Poor woman!" said Theodora; "she must have had a fright!"

"She did! I never imagined 'the merry widow' could

look so tragic; but Costa quieted her down and reassured her most successfully. They seem very intimate; I wonder if there is anything between them, and if we shall be hearing anything one of these days?"

"I think," said Theodora, "that I should have heard if there were."

"Ah, true; I forgot he is your cousin. Forgive me," he added as he raised his hat, "if I have been indiscreet."

Theodora shook her head, smiling, as they drove on.

They scarcely spoke during the rest of the way; Theodora only said once, "Athens is really a terrible place for gossip!" And Zoe answered, "I imagine it is no worse than other towns of its size."

When they reached the house, they found Costa on the upstairs landing listening very gravely to Vasiliki's complaints, and Anthi sitting on the floor with her beloved Melpomene on her lap, looking decidedly cross.

It seems she had not been a "golden child" at all that afternoon. Her doll had fallen inside some railings at the Zappion Gardens and she had peremptorily ordered one of the gardeners to jump in and get it out. When bidden to say "Please," she had obstinately refused, and when the man had obligingly climbed over and rescued the unfortunate Melpomene, and wiped the earth off her face, Anthi had not even consented to say "Thank you." She had been, according to Vasiliki, "like a little child of the streets who had never learned 'noble' manners from any one."

"Anthi!" said Theodora, "I am astonished at you! To-morrow you must find that kind man and thank him."

"No," said Anthi very decidedly, sticking out her lower lip; "I sall not say nussing to him; he was an ugly, dirty man and I woulden say 'please' and I didden say it."

"Then you must learn to say it," said Costa. And

picking her up from the floor, he deposited her, doll and all, on the broad, high mantel-shelf, which was over the fireplace.

"Now," he pronounced, "you will stay there until you say, '*please*, Uncle Costa, take me down.'"

Zoe limped across the hall and took a seat just opposite the mantel-shelf.

"This is going to be worth watching," she said in English, "though I should have thought," addressing Costa, "that you, being a diplomat, should know that ultimatums are a mistake unless in the very last extremity."

At first Anthi said nothing; she turned her head sideways and measured the distance from the floor with her eyes; but though she was a fearless child it was decidedly beyond her; then she got very red, and screamed out: "I won't never say 'please'!"

"I told you so," murmured Zoe.

Theodora stood close to the mantel-shelf in case of accidents, but said nothing.

"Very well," agreed Costa calmly; "then if you won't, shall I ask Vasiliki to bring your milk here and hand it up to you? And later on she can bring your pillow when you get sleepy."

But this was too much for Anthi.

"You are a howid, nasty man! and I won't say 'good-morning' to you, not never!"

"What a pity!"

"No, nor 'good-night'! And when it is your name-day I won't say 'May you live!' nor nussing."

"Terrible!" said Costa, laughing.

Anthi got redder and redder. "When it is New Year's Day I won't give you any pwesent! Yes, yes, I will," she cried, brandishing Melpomene by one arm; "but it sall be a nasty, dirty, old, bwoken one!"

"I shall not accept it."

"Oh," with a toss of her head; "but you won't know, because it will be wapped up in a gweat many papers."

There was silence for a few seconds, and at last Anthi burst out: "And when you are in heaven, and I, too, I san't never speak to you even there!"

At this point Triantafyllia opened the door to admit Monsieur Arnoux, whose ring below had passed unnoticed. He stared in amazement at the group, and the situation was briefly explained to him.

"What is this I hear, my cherished one?" he exclaimed, looking up at the angry, flushed, lovely little face high above him.

Anthi looked at him; then suddenly she asked: "Ah-noo, does peoples always do what you want when you say 'please'?"

This was generally interpreted as the first sign of yielding, and Monsieur Arnoux, Costa, and Theodora answered in chorus: "But of course; at once; every one does!"

Only Zoe looked disappointed. "I thought she had it in her to stick it out," she remarked.

"Zen, Ah-noo," cried Anthi triumphantly; "zen, *you* say to Unkel Costa, '*Please* put Anthi down, this at once minute'!"

"Ah," cried Zoe in a burst of laughter, "she's got you there! You must be consistent now, and take her down."

"Yes," assented Costa, also laughing, "she has certainly managed it."

So Monsieur Arnoux said very ceremoniously, "*Please* be good enough to put Anthi down."

And Costa answered, "I will, because you ask me so nicely, Monsieur Arnoux."

And Anthi was gravely deposited on the floor, and left severely to herself. The elders passed into the sitting-room. In a few moments she came sidling up to her mother.

"You can go to Vasiliki; we none of us want you here."

"Ah-noo wants me."

"No, not even Monsieur Arnoux; we none of us like ungrateful children; that is much worse than being rude."

Anthi looked up inquiringly.

"When Melpomene's arm was broken off last week, have you forgotten how Uncle Costa brought string and wire and the little pinchers, and mended it so well? And now, when he only asked you to say 'please' to him, you would not. Father could not mend Melpomene, and I could not, and Vasiliki could not, and if Uncle Costa had not been so clever and kind she would have been put away broken in a drawer for always."

Anthi frowned a little; then she hugged the restored Melpomene closely to her and trotted resolutely across the room. "Unkel Costa."

"Well?"

"I didden say 'please' to get down."

"I know you did not," very stiffly.

"But *please,* Unkel Costa, may I kiss you now?"

And so peace was made.

It was after every one had finished tea that Miss Burney arrived, having come straight from Eleni Vathi's, and she related to them the young widow's own version of the motor-car episode of which Andriotti had already told Theodora; what a shock it had been to the poor young woman, and how deeply grateful she was to Costa. The latter looked distinctly bored.

Monsieur Arnoux, who followed the rapid English with poor success, asked her: "But what was it, then, this accident?"

"Nothing very serious," answered Zoe airily; "only 'the merry widow' transformed, for the time being, into a distracted mother."

Costa glanced at her without speaking and the subject was changed. But a few moments later, when she was standing alone by the window to get the last rays of light on some new snap-shots of Anthi, he suddenly left the others and joined her.

"Mademoiselle Zoe," he began rather abruptly, "it is not like you to follow the herd! Some day when you are older your word will count; you will be of those women to whom others will listen. Well, you must stick to your sex. When others condemn and say, 'It is certainly so,' you must be the one to add, 'Perhaps not.' This young woman now — Eleni Vathi — she happens to have been misunderstood, that is all. People think she makes a joke of everything. That is not so. I know her well; she has three boys and she wants to make her house such that they may stay in it with pleasure. When she was first married she was very full of life, and a little foolish, perhaps, and knowing nothing of economy spent more than they could afford; her husband was a very hard man and exposed her mismanagement to all his own people, instead of helping her; so after his death they were all against her. But she was very devoted to his mother when she was ill for so long that the old lady's own daughters got tired of looking after her. And she is everything to her boys, and has learned to keep and even increase their little inheritance for them. I hope you will be kind to her if ever you have the opportunity, and believe well of her, and listen to no evil against her. She is a lonely little creature with not much intelligence to help her out of her worries, but she is a brave woman. I tell you this because you will hear many lies about her, and perhaps about me. But I am her friend always, ready to serve her if I can."

Zoe pulled a rose-leaf out of the glass vase before her; then she looked at him suddenly. "I understand. Thank you for telling me."

In the mean while Professor Manelli and his daughter Polymnia were coming up the Kiphissia Road toward Theodora's house. The old man walked slowly with bent head. The last five years seemed to have aged him more than the passage of time warranted, and the lines of the face were much sharper.

"Perhaps," he was saying, and there was a touch of huskiness in the voice, — "perhaps we might have left it for to-morrow."

"My dear father, I assure you it is better to get over anything disagreeable at once. The sooner she knows it, the sooner she will make up her mind to it."

"Would it not have been as well," he continued, "if I had gone alone?"

"That would only have meant two interviews instead of one; Theodora would never be satisfied without asking me, personally, what I said, and what he answered, and hearing every single word we exchanged."

However, Polymnia was mistaken; when Theodora remained alone with her uncle and cousin, — they had purposely outstayed the others, — she seemed to understand very quickly what they had come to tell her, and not to wish for many details.

"Yes," she said after her uncle's first words; "I knew that you were going to speak to — my father; Metro told me. Now you want to tell me — don't tire your voice, my uncle — that when you saw him — "

"No," interrupted Professor Manelli, "no, I did not see him; I thought he was still away, but it seems he never left Athens. It was Polymnia who saw him, quite by chance at Phaleron, to-day."

"I should only have bowed," Polymnia broke in; "but he came across the terrace of the Actaion Hotel and sat at our table while we were having tea, and was so very amiable and friendly, and took such notice of my girls and admired their hair, that I really thought

father must have seen him in the morning without my knowing it, and that it was all settled about you, and that he just wanted to be nice and intimate again with all the relations; so when Despina and Hypatia went down to the shore with the Papastathi girl and her governess, I asked him, just for something to say, if he had seen father to-day; and then when he said no, why did I ask — was there any reason — once I had begun, you know, I had to tell him; at least he half guessed, and then — then — " Polymnia stammered and came to a stop.

There was a pause, and then Theodora said in a low voice: "He understood, you mean, what my uncle's errand would be, and he told you to tell him that it was — useless?"

Polymnia, who was holding her gloves in her hand, smoothed out the creases in them mechanically. "Yes," she said at last.

"Quite useless?"

"He said," answered Polymnia, still busy with her gloves, "that he was sure that father, who was always so kind to every one, would not wish to make his stay in Athens disagreeable for him by reopening closed questions; that he wished to keep on friendly terms with all of us, but that his friendliness and even a few courteous words to a lecturer after his lecture must not be interpreted into meaning that he could ever change a decision once taken. He spoke very quietly, you know, not at all as if he were angry. Other people, he said, very probably changed more easily; it was perhaps a family failing, but — "

"But what? Please tell me all, Polymnia! The sooner I know the worst, the sooner I shall make up my mind to it."

Polymnia looked at her father triumphantly. "Well, he said, when people left him, — no, not left him, — but

when they went out of his life of their own free will, he would never take them back."

Theodora said nothing. She remained where she had been standing, her eyes fixed unseeingly before her. Her uncle, who was sitting in a low chair, grasped hold of the arms and made as though he would rise and go to her, but he sank back again, murmuring: —

"I blame myself! I blame myself! I ought to have gone to him the first day he arrived; I ought to have taken him by surprise; I ought to have given him to understand that none of us would acknowledge him unless — he is a proud man — who knows? Yes, yes, I feel now that we have not done all we might have done." And his voice as he spoke was more husky than usual.

Theodora came to him as he sat leaning back in his chair, and passed her arm round his neck. "No one could have loved me and taken care of me more than you all have done, my uncle, and there is nothing that helps so much." And bending she kissed his cheek warmly and closely.

Later on, when it was time to leave, he confessed to feeling tired, and Aglaia was sent for a carriage. Polymnia wanted to stay with Theodora.

"Let me stay and dine with you, and Nico or Costa shall come for me after dinner. Do keep me! If Metro were here, well and good, but I hate to think of you all alone!"

Theodora shook her head. "No, dear; thank you so much; but really I shall be all right. My head aches a little and I shall go to bed quite early."

"To bed — and to sleep?" added Polymnia.

"Yes, yes, to sleep, of course."

But she did not even go to bed. When the last sound had died out in the streets, when there was silence all over the city save for a distant train whistling, a cock-

crow here and there, or the hoot of a night owl in the cypresses round the little church, she still sat on the floor in her room crouched before an armchair, her face hidden in the little stained cushion, dreading with a sick weariness the dawn of another day.

CHAPTER XXVI

Metro did not return to Athens until late the next evening. Costa Manelli had made a point of meeting him at the station and driving part of the way home with him, so that he should know what had happened before meeting Theodora.

She was lying on the sofa in the sitting room when he came in, holding a book in her hand. Although he knew it to be impossible, she struck him as thinner than he had left her four days ago; her features looked drawn and pinched, and her eyelids tired.

When she saw Metro, she smiled and rose rather suddenly from the sofa, but her features contracted with a sharp twinge of pain and she grasped hold of the arm of a chair for support.

"What is it?" he cried in a startled voice.

"Nothing! Nothing at all; only that rheumatism in my leg. I have been lying still too long, and it gets cramped. It is better when I move about. Come and sit down! It has seemed long while you were away." And as she kissed him, he felt her lips hot and dry. "You have not dined?"

"No."

"Go, and wash a little, if you like, while I tell Triantafyllia to bring in your dinner."

He let her go, because he saw she preferred not to sit still. And when he returned, she sat beside him in the dining room while he ate what had been kept warm for him. She talked a good deal, telling him of Anthi's funny sayings during his absence, and of her passage at arms with Costa; she spoke of having been with Zoe

to the cinematograph, described the perfect staging of "the last days of Pompeii" and the wonderful representation of the panic-stricken crowds after the irruption of Vesuvius. He wanted to know whether she had not seen Dr. Paschali about the pain in her leg.

It had never even crossed her mind, she said. "Why, Metro, rheumatism is such a safe ailment; one rubs the place a little and keeps it warm, and that is all; the doctor would only laugh at me for calling him in."

"He may laugh if he likes," said Metro, "but I shall call him to-morrow." And he got up from the table and came round to where Theodora was sitting.

She rose at once. "I am going to see why Triantafyllia does not bring your coffee."

He caught hold of her arm suddenly, as she turned toward the door, though he was not generally brusque in his movements. "Theodora! It hurts me to see you! I — I — would do everything! Can I do nothing?"

She shook her head, and disengaged herself quietly. "There is nothing to do. Nothing for any one to do — save one!"

Then she crossed the hall and he heard her go into the passage toward the kitchen. Metro sat down heavily before the table, and took his head in his hands. And while he sat there a plan was born in his mind.

In the morning Theodora told him that she was better, but would rest in bed a little later than usual. However, the rest did not last more than ten minutes after he had left the room. She was positive that if he had been there to see her dragging herself from the washstand to her toilet table, and from that to the wardrobe, and the spasm of pain that contracted her features at every movement, he would have insisted on carrying her back to her bed. She managed at last to get as far as the sitting room, and asked Triantafyllia to bring her some break-

fast there. The maid was just taking the tray away, when Metro came into the room.

"You are up already?"

"Yes; bed is not good for rheumatism, but as you see I am taking care of myself."

He waited until Triantafyllia had left the room, and sat down on a chair beside the sofa. His face looked grave and very determined.

"Listen to me," he began, and his voice was deeper than usual; "I do not intend that you shall torment yourself any longer; I want you to believe that things will be arranged; perhaps very soon."

"No," she whispered; "they never will; never! never! never!"

Then quite suddenly her self-control broke down, and she threw herself against him in a paroxysm of weeping. He said nothing. He just held her closely to him, and stroked her hair. In a few minutes her sobs died away, and she lifted her face from his shoulder.

"You must not think I shall always mind so much, Metro! You are always so good to me! So good always! Now I want you to be patient just a little longer, until I get used to the thought that there is no help for my trouble."

"No," he said distinctly and quietly; "my patience is ended. I am going to find the help."

"You?"

"Yes, I. Who else but I? It is my fault that it should seem strange to you. If I had done from the first what I am going to do now, perhaps you would not have suffered for so long."

Theodora sat up and pressed her hair back from her face with both hands. "What — are — you — going to do — now!" she repeated slowly.

"I am going to speak to your father."

"But — "

"I know what he said to your cousin; but those were perhaps words of the air, because — who knows? — he may have thought it was not for her to speak to him of matters so entirely between himself and you. For me, it is different; he can say nothing. It is my duty to mix myself in all that concerns you. Also, from me he will understand better what is happening. After that he can never say he does not know."

"You mean," she said scarcely above her breath, "to go to him yourself! — to tell him how his hardness is killing me? You will — Oh, Metro! Oh! I never hoped — Even if he will not listen to you, how can I ever thank —" And suddenly bending down, she pressed her lips to his hand.

He pulled it away and turned on her almost fiercely. "Never say it again! I will not have the word 'thank' between you and me!"

"Forgive me!" She sat upright and held out both hands to him. "I will remember, Metro." But the sudden movement made her close her eyes with pain.

He settled a cushion behind her back. "Keep still and do not move! I am going to Dr. Paschali's now, to tell them to send him as soon as he returns to his house." And he crossed the room and opened the door.

"After the doctor's shall you come back here, Metro, or go on to the University?"

He looked back. "No, I am going to the hotel, to find your father."

But before he could leave the room he came face to face with Monsieur Arnoux, who was entering; the maid was at the door downstairs, the latter explained, — that was how he had come straight up without ringing.

He looked from Metro, beside him, to Theodora on the sofa.

"I deeply regret to find you suffering, madame."

"It is nothing, a little rheumatism." Then suddenly,

impulsively, she held out her hand to him. "Monsieur Arnoux! Metro is going to see my father!"

It was the first time since her marriage that Monsieur Arnoux had heard her mention her father. He bent low over her hand. "Madame, I wish him good luck."

Metro smiled gravely. "Thank you, Master."

Theodora looked at the two men standing side by side, and suddenly, addressing her husband, she said: "Metro, if he should not decide — at once — I mean, perhaps, if you could persuade him at least to see Anthi. I would send her alone; and you know, she is so like my mother, that — "

"Yes," assented Metro, "I understand."

Theodora sat upright once more with very flushed cheeks, and nervous, excited voice. "Monsieur Arnoux, if my father consents to see her, at least, do you not think that — ?"

"I have not the honor of knowing your father, but if *my* daughter had married a — a rag-picker and little Anthi was shown to me, as the result of the union, I should say my daughter had done marvelously well! Go, Metro! I will stay here in a corner with a book, and see that your wife remains quiet."

And Theodora listened to Metro's steps as he went down the stairs to the street door.

CHAPTER XXVII

When Metro arrived before the Hôtel de la Grande Bretagne he ran rapidly up the steps and spoke to the hall porter. The latter consulted a placard of names hanging behind him. Yes, he answered, Kyrios Douka was upstairs, and what name should he announce?

"Say some one wishes to see him on important business; if he asks for my name, I will give it."

In a few seconds the answer came down through the speaking-tube. The gentleman was to be shown up.

Metro went alone up the broad, carpeted staircase, and was met at the top by a manservant, who led him through a wide landing, dominated at one end by an enormous plaster statue of Rhigas Pheraios, through a narrower, inner corridor, threw open the door at the farthest end, and effaced himself to let him pass.

For a few seconds the light pouring in through the open windows blinded Metro after the darkness of the passage, but a moment afterwards he was conscious of a tall, upright figure rising from a desk at the other end of the room and advancing toward him.

Michael Douka's face was of the lean, aquiline type not unusual in Greece; his mustache and the hair, which was still plentiful, were gray. Strictly speaking he might not be called an extraordinarily handsome man, but there was something about the well-finished features, the straight line of the back, the quiet, decided movements which at once gave the impression, or rather the conviction, that he was, as the Zulus express it, "of the blood of chiefs."

"My dear Professor, it is very good of you to pay a

visit to an old man who has no claim, save that of appreciation, on the valuable time of you scientific men."

There was not the slightest trace of astonishment in the cool, quiet voice, and he held out his hand as he spoke. As he took it, Metro found himself noticing that the hand was older than the face; a very white hand, with loose skin and raised blue veins.

Douka pulled a chair forward and remained standing until Metro had seated himself; then he also took a seat and turned a courteous, attentive face to the younger man.

"Before anything else," said Metro, "you must forgive me for not sending my name before coming up. I had perhaps no right to force myself on you without first —"

"My dear sir," interrupted Douka, "you wrong yourself! A visit from such an eminent numismatologist as yourself can never be aught but a privilege."

"Only that I did not come to speak of coins, but of your daughter."

Not a muscle moved in the old man's face.

"I regret —" he began.

But Metro interrupted him at once, raising his hand. "Wait, if you please! What I came to say I must say; it is my duty to give you clearly to understand how very deeply Theodora has suffered from the estrangement between you. Ever since I brought her back from our wedding journey, more than six years ago, she has not been entirely happy for a single day, not even, I think, for a single hour. I believe I have done all that a man could, — at least, all that a man such as I am could, — that she should lack for nothing, and because she is — what she is — she has tried to seem quite content; but it is not true; she has never been content; and you ought to know it."

"I regret," repeated his father-in-law, as quietly as though he had never been interrupted, "that my excellent

brother-in-law, Professor Manelli, who has heard that my decision on the subject you mention is irrevocable, should not have spared you the trouble of reopening a definitely closed question."

Metro swallowed once or twice before speaking again. "But there is no logic in the position you are taking. If you cannot bring yourself to forgive your daughter for becoming my wife, not even so far as simply to recognize her in the street; if, while knowing the misery you are causing her, you still continue in your resolve, how is it that you have of your own free will met and spoken with me in a way which, outwardly at least, has been courteous and almost friendly?"

"My dear Professor, and pray why not? It seems almost unnecessary to say that I have never had the slightest ill-feeling against you personally; not the remotest, believe me!"

"But then — I confess I do not understand you at all. Why should Theodora in that case — "

The old man raised his eyebrows slightly. "When your wife, my dear sir, was still my daughter, I had other views for her. There are certain things a Douka owes to her family. By her very birth she contracts certain debts which the mere fact of my daughter having repudiated makes it impossible for me to acknowledge her as such. I am sure you will understand without further explanation."

"No; I do not understand at all. Even if you mean that there was some one else — some man of good family — whom you wished her to marry before we met, what of that? We are not living in the years before the Revolution, when fathers promised their children to each other while they were infants in their cradles, and insisted at all costs that the marriage should take place when they grew up! I do not wish to speak of myself — of our love — " Douka smiled slightly as at the mention

of so unimportant a factor in the case. "But you must admit that Theodora was of full age, and was free to please herself. Only one of royal blood could be so bound as you say; she was not a princess!"

"She was a Douka."

The tone was rather weary, as though the old man despaired of ever making this obtuse individual understand.

"Even granting that she did wrong, though I do not grant it for a moment, but it may seem different from your point of view; granting this, then, still it is impossible to undo what has been done."

"Perfectly impossible," assented Douka graciously.

"In that case, then," resumed Metro, flushing a little, "cannot you believe that, though your daughter may have disappointed you in one thing, however important you think it, she still continues to love you so deeply that your refusal to see her is slowly but surely sapping her happiness and her health?"

"Oh, my dear sir!" answered Douka, totally ignoring the first part of Metro's question; "I am positive that your very natural anxiety is making you exaggerate, and that an excess of modesty which does you credit prevents you from realizing how perfectly assured your wife's happiness must be in such good hands as your own. You must not attach undue importance to slight attacks of low spirits, or of longing after unattainable things. All young women are liable to them. A little travel, a little change of scene and surroundings, especially in this depressingly hot weather, and all will be well again. Believe an old man's experience."

Metro rose. His voice trembled slightly. "Excuse me for having troubled you for so long, sir, and excuse me also if I add that from this day forward I wish to have no acquaintance of any kind with one who ignores my wife."

Michael acquiesced calmly. "That must be as you

will, my dear sir; I shall be guided entirely by you in the matter."

He accompanied Metro out of the room, making a casual remark, as they crossed the dark landing, about the great heat which wilted the leaves of the tall plants standing at the head of the staircase.

With his foot on the first step, Metro stopped. "Theodora, sir," he began in a stiff, colorless voice, "wished me to tell you that our little girl is considered strikingly like her own mother, your wife."

"That could not be better," answered his father-in-law very graciously. "Kyria Douka was, as you may have heard, a particularly handsome woman."

"She also wished me to add," continued Metro, with a visible effort, "that should you care to see the child, she shall be sent to you alone with her nurse."

"I could not think of giving you the trouble," objected Douka politely; "besides, to confess the truth, I am afraid I am a little past the society of children of such tender years."

Metro hesitated a second; he would have gone, but Theodora's last words rang in his ears: "If you can only persuade him to see Anthi!"

"She is a good child," he persisted; "she would not give you any trouble."

There was a polite smile; the smile of one who listens patiently to a fond parent's praise of his children. "I have no doubt of it, no doubt whatever. But I am convinced that a visit to an old man like myself would not be entertaining for your little one. May she live to you, my dear sir! May she live to you!"

And then Metro returned the ceremonious bow very curtly, and plunged down the staircase.

In the mean while the two who waited for his return remained silent for a long time. Theodora lay back on

the sofa, her eyes closed, and a little wrinkle of pain on her forehead. Monsieur Arnoux had taken a book from the bookcase and was reading.

The room was very still; once some rose-petals fell from a glass on to the table with a soft flutter, and once the shutters, which were on the latch, rattled backward and forward.

At last Theodora turned her head. "What are you reading, Monsieur Arnoux?"

"This," said Monsieur Arnoux, without raising his eyes from the page: —

> "'Selon que l'âme, aimante, humble, bonne, sereine,
> Aspire à la lumière et tend vers l'idéal,
> Ou s'alourdit, immonde, au poids croissant du mal,
> Dans la vie infinie on monte et l'on s'élance,
> Ou l'on tombe; et tout être est sa propre balance.'"

"Ah, Victor Hugo! It is a long time since I have read any."

"Yes, I know; 'le père Hugo' is quite out of fashion. But what will you, madame? I am of the old school. As I was telling some of the younger ones when I was last in Paris, nothing is easier than to criticize, to pick out the little exaggerations of the surface; but how many poets have I not known in the small cafés of Batignolles and Montmartre who would shrug their shoulders, a little while ago, if mention were made before them of the fame of Victor Hugo, and who to-day are content — what do I say? — are delighted, if they can earn fifty sous a day writing advertisement verses for a new hair-dye or for the wonderful pills of Dr. So-and-so."

Theodora smiled. "I also do not believe in fashions in literature. It is only that I have not read any poetry at all these last three or four years."

There was a long silence again, and then Theodora said: "Metro has been gone a long time!"

"It is a serious interview, madame." Then, as she did not answer, he continued: "If there is any one who can succeed in convincing, even the most prejudiced against him, of the justice of a cause, it is Metro."

"But I fear — "

"Fear nothing, madame! When Boussod, the Minister of Fine Arts, had absolutely decided on letting the Montvilliers Collection of antiquities be sold to America, which Metro had helped me to catalogue and appraise, was it not he who persuaded Boussod to keep it for France?"

Theodora looked astonished. "Metro? He never told me."

"No, he would not. He is of those who do things and leave others to speak of them."

"But this is not the same thing," said Theodora in a very low voice. "This is not impersonal; I fear that Metro may not understand the point of view. To one who has been born and brought up and surrounded as my — my father has, gentle birth, you know, seems — in those we marry — absolutely indispensable."

"Are you not wronging monsieur your father? He is, I have been told, a man of great intelligence and perception, who has traveled much and who has had a wide knowledge of men. It seems to me impossible that he should not discern all that there is noble and exceptional in your husband's character."

"And yet I fear that he might even appreciate Metro, and yet consider that he was not — "

Monsieur Arnoux's manners were generally irreproachable, but this time he interrupted Theodora by shutting very abruptly the book he was holding. "Of what use, then, is gentle birth without gentle understanding? Was not my mother a De la Rochejacquelin? I ask your pardon; believe me, I would not mention it, were it not necessary to explain, — and did she, do you think,

ever allow my father to dwell on the fact that her birth was much higher than his? Oh, but never! Never, I assure you! Once a cousin of hers came to Montpellier, when I was not higher than that — and took me on his knees, and said, 'Always remember, my little one, that you have the blood of the De la Rochejacquelins in your veins.' And my mother added very quickly, 'Yes, my cousin, it is as I tell him constantly that we must ever be grateful for the chances of our birth, and that he must never forget that he has the great honor of being the son of Olivier Arnoux.' — And I have forgotten neither the one nor the other!"

Suddenly the door was pushed open, and Metro came into the room.

He closed the door behind him, and stood for some seconds leaning his back against it. Monsieur Arnoux half rose in his chair, but Metro, with eyes that looked through him as though he were not there, strode up to the sofa and put his arms round Theodora, pressing her face against his shoulder.

"My wife, such as I am, you must content yourself with me! There is no other!"

Theodora shivered a little as he held her, but did not attempt to raise her head. She also seemed unconscious of the presence of a third person. For a few moments Metro rocked her to and fro in his arms with his lips pressed to her hair.

Then she looked up. "You mean — that my father —"

His arms fell to his side and he started a pace back from the sofa. "Your father! A fine father truly! He is *not* a father! He never was a father! He is a man with a piece of ice for a heart and with neither bowels nor blood in him! Your *father!* A father with us simple people is made up of duties, of obligations, of sacrifice, of tenderness, of love! What has he ever given you of all this? What?" And he flung out both hands with a

sudden, passionate gesture. "He gave you life to procure a moment's pleasure for himself! He gave you teaching and education to satisfy his pride! He used your devotion and your youth to procure an easier life always for himself! And he gave you his kingly name before which everything must bow down. But he never cared for you, or loved you! Not for one single instant!"

His face was flushed to a dusky red; the words poured in a torrent from his mouth and he struck the open palm of one hand repeatedly with the closed fist of the other.

"Metro!"

It was a cry of horror. She had dragged herself off the sofa, and stood upright against the one end of it, her white dressing-gown hanging in loose folds about her. Her eyes seemed to have sunk deep in their sockets and her arms were raised as though to ward off a blow.

"Metro! Metro! Metro!"

Her voice rose with each repetition of the name until the last was almost a scream. Hurriedly, without any support, though a spasm of pain crossed her face each time she put her left foot to the ground, she turned to leave the room. Metro sprang forward, but she pushed him from her.

"Leave me, please! Leave me! Let me go!"

She pulled open the door, passed through it, and closed it after her. There were a few halting steps outside the room, then a moment's silence, then a heavy thud.

The two maids who had heard the fall came running up the passage from the kitchen with shrill cries of alarm.

Theodora was lying on the floor with closed eyes, her head fallen back against the blue curtain.

Before Metro could get his arms under her, there was a ring at the bell. Triantafyllia pulled the cord to open the street door below, and peered over the balustrade.

"Glory be to God!" she cried; "it is the doctor!"

Dr. Paschali heard the exclamation and came running

up the stairs. He was a pleasant, unobtrusive little man in social life, but with his patients or when there was work to be done, there was never the slightest hesitancy about him. He knelt beside Theodora, took one of the inert hands in his, turned up the eyelids and laid his ear over her chest. "Has she been long in this faint?"

Monsieur Arnoux answered him. "No, it was just the moment before you came, that she fell."

"Did she complain of giddiness before she fell?"

"I did not hear her; she was alone, outside the room."

Dr. Paschali addressed Metro directly. "Did your wife complain of giddiness yesterday?"

"No," he said, his eyes fixed on Theodora.

"Why did you send for me to-day? What was the matter with her?"

"Her leg," muttered Metro, still looking down.

"Her leg? What about her leg? Has she hurt it? sprained it? or what? Speak up, man! — How do you expect me to guess?"

Metro looked at him, but there was an absent look in his eyes, and he answered mechanically. "She had rheumatism down the side of her leg: it is more than a week now; she did not want to send for you; she said it was nothing, but I saw she was in pain, and I called round this morning."

"I am glad you had the sense. Rheumatism down the side of her leg — hm — let me see; which leg?"

"The left one."

Slowly the doctor's fingers traveled over the line of the thigh bone between the hip joint and the knee, as Theodora lay stretched before him; up and down, on one side, and on the other. Suddenly, as he pressed on one spot a little below the waist, there was a stifled groan, and Theodora opened her eyes to close them again in a sharp contraction of all the features.

"You hurt!" she moaned. "You hurt!"

"Here!" ordered the doctor; "lift her up! Metro, take the shoulders, I will take the feet, let us put her on her bed. I can examine her properly there. Do not be anxious, Kyria Philippides! We shall neither let you fall nor hurt you. There, Metro, rest her head on your shoulder, and you, my girl," — turning to Aglaia, — "put your hands under her waist, so, while I take the knees."

And they lifted her slowly while Triantafyllia rushed forward to open the bedroom door and Monsieur Arnoux held aside the blue linen curtain.

Then he waited in the study until about a quarter of an hour later, when Metro with the doctor entered it together.

"Has she been doing anything for it?" the latter was asking.

"She told me she kept it warm, and that she made Triantafyllia rub it one night with some ointment."

"Hm! just what she should not have done, of course. When *will* people learn to leave amateur doctoring alone? Rubbing, indeed! And I can imagine what strength that massive maid of yours will have put into her rubbing!"

"I was away," said Metro, "and she was afraid you would laugh at her if she called you in."

"And if I had laughed, would it have killed her? As it happens, I should not have laughed, and I might have saved her much pain. You understand, it must have been pretty bad just now for the leg to give way under her as soon as she tried to walk without support. Yes," he added in answer to Monsieur Arnoux's question; "yes, it is sciatica. Rather an acute attack, too, I am afraid. I shall write down a good dose of antipyrin now," he said to Metro, as he sat down before the desk.

Metro took the prescription and folded it across two or three times. There was a helpless, almost beseeching

look in his eyes that reminded Monsieur Arnoux of the Metro of twenty years ago; of the friendless, ill-nourished lad who used to stand at the door of his room twisting his old cap in his hands until the invitation to come in had been repeated two or three times.

"Doctor, how long will she be ill? How long will she suffer this pain?"

"Ah, my friend, you ask more than I can answer; it depends on so many things. For the present, with the veronal powder which I have just given her, I expect she will sleep until the afternoon. See that she is not disturbed, and let her have the antipyrin, as soon as she awakes. I shall call again toward evening."

When the doctor left, Monsieur Arnoux went down to the street door with him. A few minutes later he came upstairs again on tiptoes, closed the door of the landing with slow precaution, and returned to the study. Metro was sitting where he had left him, only that he had dropped his arms on the back of a chair and buried his face in them.

The old man stood for a moment looking at him, but neither spoke nor touched him. He put some papers straight on the desk, picked up a fallen pamphlet, and going to the window where the sun was streaming in, closed the shutters softly.

"When I was downstairs," he said at last in a casual voice, "the little one returned from her walk."

Metro started up. "Where is she? She must make no noise!"

"I permitted myself to give a little note on my card to Madame Valliadi, explaining the circumstances, and asking in your name that the little one might spend the rest of the day with her cousins; and I told Vasiliki to take her there. Did I do well?"

"You think of everything," muttered Metro, and his head fell back on his arms again.

Theodora slept even longer than Dr. Paschali had expected; it was past seven in the evening when she opened her eyes. She became conscious at once of the pain in her hip, but for the moment it was not acute.

Some one was sitting beside her in the dusk. "Metro, is it you?"

He passed his hand gently over her uncovered arm as it lay outside the sheet.

"Did I fall down?"

She felt his lips against her arm before he spoke in a low voice. "Yes. I spoke words that hurt you, and you went out of the room and you fell; it was my fault! Mine!"

"Hush, hush! It was the pain. It was really, Metro. Once before in Vienna long ago when I cut my hand, — where the mark is on my wrist, you know, — I fainted."

His shoulders shook, and he buried his face in the hollow of her arm. Then, as though a dam had suddenly been lifted, the tender words that were so rare with him came in a rush.

"My golden love! My sweetness! My little, little wife! My Soul!"

Theodora's right hand closed weakly round the smooth, dark head lying in the hollow of her arm. He felt her touch instantly and lifted his face to hers bent down above him.

"Love! Love of my heart!" he whispered once more, his lips scarcely forming the words, and she drew him up toward her until his head rested on her shoulder and she could lay her lips on his.

There was a knock at the door, and Metro stood up before asking: "Who is it?"

"Kyrie," — it was Vasiliki's voice, — "the doctor has come again, and they say, shall he pass in here?"

The doctor advised Theodora to keep as motionless

as possible, and before leaving he gave a second veronal powder in a cup of hot milk.

Theodora slept nearly all through that night, but toward early morning the effects of the veronal wore off. At first, it was only a dull dragging of the muscles, an unaccountable discomfort lurking in the background, half in dreams and half in reality, until by slow degrees she awoke to the full consciousness of burning, raging pain; pain which with very short intervals lasted for the next three days; pain that demoralized, that routed all self-control, all disguise; pain that burned and twisted in her limbs, and bit, and bored, and ground. She thought dimly now and again of martyrs and heroes and understood that she was not cast in their mould, for she feared that nothing would have been sacred against a promise of instant cessation of the unspeakable torment.

Toward evening of the third day she could not lie still for a moment, or even keep from moaning; a red-hot screw was twisting its way inside her hip bone; now high, now low. At seven Metro in despair had brought the doctor again, and he decided to give her an injection of morphine.

Theodora had expected so much from the morphine, such miraculous instantaneous cessation of pain, that at first she was sorely disappointed.

After the doctor had left, she complained to Metro of his hurry. "Why did he not wait until it took effect? Suppose it was not enough?"

"It was a whole tube."

"Suppose I keep wide awake; suppose the pain is too strong for it?"

"Lie still, my child!"

"Suppose — "

"Try to suppose nothing! Make your mind a blank. Tell yourself you are going to rest!"

She clenched her teeth, but a moan of pain escaped

her, as her body turned slightly in the bed. Suddenly a thrill of delight went through her as she reached for her handkerchief and found her hand numb and heavy to lift. Next came a dullness, a sort of veil drawn over the acute pain; then a numbness stole through her arms and breast; then a long interval of quietude. She was still conscious of pain, but it seemed a detached sensation, not belonging to her, as though the communication with the brain center had suddenly been cut off.

"Metro," — her own voice sounded to her as though coming from a distance. "I — am — better — " she tried to say, but the words trailed away into nothingness.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Monday, the 17th of September, was a very hot day that year, and many people, deceived by the coolness of the first days of the month into thinking that autumn was upon them, had slipped back into summer habits.

The Laras were still in Kiphissia, but Zoe, with whom Miss Burney had been staying for some days, had come down with her for a morning's shopping. They had lunched at the Philippides' and were returning to the country by a late train in the cool of the evening. Just now, after the very necessary siesta, they had all assembled in the sitting room. Metro had sent for a tray of ices from Dorée's because Theodora had mentioned at lunch-time that it was just the kind of day for them. Monsieur Arnoux had called some time before to persuade Metro to go down to Phaleron with him, and Costa Manelli had just come in.

Theodora was lying on the couch, and Zoe, in a borrowed pink dressing-gown whose long, loose sleeves left her arms bare from the shoulder, sat on the floor beside her, balancing an ice plate on one hunched-up knee. Little Anthi, just as she was after her afternoon sleep, in a short, white petticoat, and her curls pinned on the top of her head, was sitting on her father's knee and getting more than the lion's share of the strawberry ice he was holding. As soon as the last spoonful was swallowed, she tugged at her father's coat. "Now, baba, the stowy."

Metro looked astonished. "What story?"

"Why," cried Anthi reproachfully, "don't you wemember? You began it yesterday and then it was time to

go to bed, and you said it was a vewy long stowy and we would finish it to-day."

"Ah, yes, true; and where did we stop?"

"You stopped at 'And then the Pasha'— Now go on! Please, baba."

And Metro, gathering together the memories of Maroussa's far-away story-telling days in Poros, obediently went on.

"And then the Pasha, as it was a Friday, wanted to wear the green slippers, so he clapped his hands three times for the little black slave whose name was Khalil — "

And Anthi with a little sigh of content leaned back against his shoulder and settled herself to listen.

Theodora stretched her arms high above her head as she lay on the cushions and gave a sigh of weariness. For more than a month she had been leading her usual life, but the weeks of pain and the long, hot summer had left her very limp and listless. All the color seemed drained out of her face, and her eyes were dull and dark-shadowed. There had been once again a talk of a change to Poros; but no habitable house had been found there. She had been for a fortnight in August to Kiphissia, but even there it had been terribly hot just then, and she had returned to town looking no better than when she had left it. So her Uncle Manelli, without saying a word of his intention to any one, had written a letter to her Uncle Pandeli in London and the result had been a most cordial invitation to Theodora and her child to come and pay him a long visit to England. If, he added in his letter, her husband were able to accompany her, he would be delighted to welcome him. But this Metro had declared to be impossible; it was getting near the opening of the autumn term of the University, and he could not possibly think of absenting himself. Also, though he did not mention this to Theodora, it would be hard enough to manage the expense of her journey,

without adding his own. Aglaia was returning temporarily to her island of Andros, so Triantafyllia would keep house for him, and he told Theodora that he would thoroughly enjoy himself going long expeditions with Monsieur Arnoux and Tarnier and Chabert, and taking odd meals here and there, and never feeling obliged to be punctual, and in general re-living for a little his bachelor days; and she believed him. She was to leave in about a fortnight by the Marseilles route. Costa Manelli took her empty ice plate and put it on the table.

"What have you been doing with yourself, all day, Costa?"

"I am afraid you will laugh at me mercilessly when I confess that I spent nearly all morning in Polymnia's and Nico's room, joining them in worship at the shrine of the new baby; he is an adorable little specimen, all creases and chuckles."

"I know he is. Polymnia brought him to me on Friday and I enjoyed him for the whole afternoon. And what did you do with the rest of your time?"

"Part of it I spent in trying to persuade my father to smoke less. You know how huskily he has been talking for weeks now. He insists that it is only the after effects of that bad cold he had, but it persists too long, and I am sure smoking is bad for his throat."

"And will he give it up?"

"Not he! He promises to lessen it, but I shall have to overlook him."

Theodora stooped over the edge of the sofa to pick up a paper fan which had fallen on the floor. "How hot it is still! I have forgotten what it feels like to be cool all day."

"You will soon remember in England," said Zoe.

"Yes; won't it be nice!"

"You will be feeling strange at first, after so many years," said Miss Burney.

"I don't know; one falls again so easily and naturally into luxurious habits; into the ways of a perfectly organized and punctual household like my Uncle Pandeli's. After a day or two it will seem the most natural and ordinary thing in the world to have a well-trained housemaid always tidy and trim in starched print dress, even in the depth of winter, gliding into my room at the exactly appointed hour every morning, moving swiftly and noiselessly about, drawing up the blinds, building up the fire." She smiled a little. "I can see from here the hot-water cans at dressing time in the evening, set right in the middle of the basin and covered with a folded towel. If my watch should happen to go wrong I need only wait until the moment Uncle Pandeli introduces his latchkey into the lock of the hall door and I shall know that it is precisely twenty minutes to seven, and woe betide Andrews, the butler, if dinner is not announced before the last stroke of eight."

"Don't you get rather sick of all that ceremony every day of your life?" asked Zoe.

"No," said Theodora; "I like it."

At the other end of the room the story of the Pasha's slippers had ceased for a moment, and Anthi's voice was heard in protest. "And then? And then? Please go on, baba; *please* do! Vasiliki will come to take me, now, this at once minute."

And Metro continued; " — And so the Pasha ordered all the slaves of the palace — "

Miss Burney looked round at the two, and then asked Theodora: "How long, now, do you think of staying away?"

"We haven't fixed any time, but I scarcely expect to be back before February or March. I should not care for Anthi to travel in the middle of winter, and besides, it would not be worth the long journey and the expense for a few weeks only."

"February or March!" echoed Zoe; "nearly six months! Oh, don't go, Theodora! You know, 'Partir c'est mourir un peu'!"

"Why, Zoe, what has come over you to-day? You are becoming tragic!"

Zoe seemed as if she had not heard; she sat up on the floor, and clasping her arms round her knees, looked unseeingly out of the window. "Because it *is* to die, you know, and more than a little. It is so much more horribly true even than it sounds. It is the very long, slow, drawn-out death! It is not the cutting, but the gradual loosening of the tiny links that make the beauty of life together; those that you think do not count; the little commonplace, everyday details; those one does not write about in letters, or almost never; the new acquaintances and their surroundings; nothing very interesting, perhaps, but new, and which lead to new points of view."

"I don't know; one does write about the people one meets, in intimate letters; at least I do."

"And would you write about the new dress in which you cannot but look a little different, or the rearranging of an old one which did or did not succeed; about the breakage which removes a familiar object from your room, or the new vase or frame that you buy; of the little stupid jokes, those that become funny by daily repetition? Perhaps you may write of the book you have read and like, but scarcely about the one which you begin and leave unfinished, and which you would have liked once, only you don't now, because you think differently about some things which are too long to explain. And what about the discussions, the disagreements even; the talks that grow out of chance sentences; the gossip about this one or that one; the look across the room that shows you understand; the — the — thousands of things that you share by just breathing the same air. Oh, how

they count! How they count! You may write and receive letters every day if you like, but for me, I would far rather live in the same place even if one were only to meet once a month for an hour's talk!"

"Don't be stingy now!" put in Miss Burney quietly: "make it two, and throw in a cup of tea."

Then every one laughed, Zoe included, and Vasiliki opened the door, completely filling up the doorway and calling for Anthi to come and get dressed for her walk. Anthi protested that the story was unfinished; but her father declared that there was too much left of it for that day, and promised that it should be completed at the next telling.

Then Theodora left the couch and went and sat by the open window, and Zoe limped slowly across the room to the piano and began playing scraps from Charpentier's "Louise."

After a moment Monsieur Arnoux began supplying the words in a thin, quavering, old, tenor voice which had once been very sweet: —

"Nous sommes tous les amants, fidèles à leur serment!
Ah! le divin roman!

. . . . . .

Nous sommes toutes les âmes que brûle la sainte flamme du désir.
Ah! la parole idéale dont s'énivre mon corps tout entier!
Dis encore ta chanson de délice! Ta chanson victorieuse, ta chanson de printemps!"

"Bravo! Bravo!" cried Theodora and Miss Burney, clapping their hands.

Monsieur Arnoux turned to Zoe, laughing a little. "Ah, mademoiselle! mademoiselle! See, then, how you make me cover myself with ridicule! But your playing, it brings back so many things! It is an English poet, I cannot remember which, who said, 'there is no greater charity to mankind than music.'"

"It is that," agreed Miss Burney.

Metro picked up a little bronze statuette of Venus which Theodora used as a paper-weight. "Do you put music, then, before all the other arts, Master?"

"But yes, my friend; but certainly."

"I am not quite sure," said Metro slowly; "it is true there are moments when everything bad, or that is a great trouble, disappears as you listen to music; but it is too vague, it expresses much in general but nothing precise; for me, this" — and he passed his fingers over the statuette — "the perfect form; all the beauty that the sculptor has brought out of the rough block; all that he has put into the statue, and even all that he has not, and that each one of us discovers for himself — appeals more to me."

"It is the pure Greek in you that speaks," said Theodora; "but whether it is because I have lived longer abroad, I do not know, but I feel with Monsieur Arnoux. With whom do you agree, Costa?"

"Hush!" cried Zoe, raising her hand; "what are they shouting?"

A confused sound of many voices was coming through the open windows. Not from the street below, but from farther away. Here and there the name of an evening newspaper could be heard, but the sentences which followed were drowned in shouts and a strange medley of cries.

Metro started up and went out on to the balcony, followed by Monsieur Arnoux.

"I cannot distinguish anything," Metro said after a moment or two.

"Can it be the nomination of a new Minister in the place of Teropoulos?" suggested Monsieur Arnoux.

"There seems too much excitement for that; I wonder if — " But he did not complete his sentence. After a second or two, he said, "I will go and find out."

"I will come with you."

"Come!"

"Costa!" Metro called out, with the handle of the outer door in his hand, "will you not come also?"

"No, I will wait here with the ladies, for your news."

"I expect, though, that it is about the new Minister," said Zoe, shutting the piano; "what else can it be?"

Miss Burney looked at her wrist watch. "At what time will our train be starting?"

"At seven-forty," said Zoe; "we have plenty of time yet. We *must* wait until they return." Then, going back to the interrupted discussion, "For me it is music, music, music, first always, easily first. Just think! Can you find any single other thing in the whole world for which you might not be disinclined sometimes? But music! If you are lazy, or cross, or tired, you fold your hands and listen, and it is divine; if you are working, you go on with your work, and you dread the moment the music will stop; if you are walking and a military band passes, your step becomes springy, and as the little boy says in 'Punch,' 'You feel happier than you are.' If you are abroad, and you go into a smart café or restaurant feeling jolly and holiday-like, it makes you feel still jollier. If you have a weight on your heart, it helps you to cry; if it is only a guitar in the street at night, you pull yourself up on your elbow in bed and think of water, and moonlight, and Venice. Why, I believe — "

She broke off at the sound of voices in the hall and the opening of the room door. Metro and Monsieur Arnoux had returned and Nasso also was with them.

"Nasso!" called out Zoe; "come here! We are talking about music, and I say — "

"Music!" shouted Nasso; "music!" His eyes shone with excitement and he waved three or four newspapers

over his head; "yes, we shall have plenty of music, but it will be cannon music!"

Zoe opened her eyes very wide and stood quite still. Costa sprang up from his seat, and Theodora looked in wonder from one to the other of the three men.

Metro spoke at once. "It is great news! Most serious news! The cup has overflowed at last! The Turks have traded too long on our forbearance. What Tricoupis dreamt of, Venizelos has accomplished — the Balkan League! It is mobilization in all the four countries at once; ourselves, Servia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro!"

"General mobilization?" gasped Zoe.

"General, yes."

"And is war declared?"

"Not officially, but that is only a matter of form."

"I think," laughed Nasso, "that the Turkish Minister may pack his hand valise as well as his big trunks to-night! Why, the fleet is coaling with feverish haste. Oh, glory! glory! To think that I should see real fighting! I never expected such luck! Honestly, I never did! Oh, I should like to see their faces now, those who stuck up for our nice, humble, 'irreproachable attitude,' those who thought we should sit quietly at home and carefully avoid war; those who — " Then he suddenly stopped short.

But Costa Manelli stood before him with outstretched hands and shining eyes. "Don't stop, Nasso, lad! Don't stop! You can look in my face, for I was of those who thought our attitude wise. *I* was against war, but not against *this* war! This is not an aggressive war, a needless war; this is a war of liberation! This is to set free all our brothers who are still enslaved. God bring it to a glorious end!"

Nasso put his big, young arms round Costa and literally hugged him.

"The time has been long in coming!" And Zoe's voice

choked a little as she said it. "May it be blessed now that it has come!"

"Amen!" said the others gravely; and even Nasso sobered as he said it.

"Costa! please, will you explain!" cried Theodora. "You see, I don't know; I was not here last time; what does general mobilization exactly mean? What ages does it include?"

Before Costa or her husband could answer her, Nasso broke in. "Why trouble your head about ages? The newspapers will give you all the details that you want. For the present you can take it from me, that the ages include all of us here present."

"What, and me also?" laughed Monsieur Arnoux. "And do you think I would not come? Am I not half a Greek? Where will you put me? In the army or in the navy?"

Nasso, who could not keep still for a moment, ran across to the little old man and put his hands on his shoulders. "Either service would be proud to have you, Monsieur Arnoux!"

"Ah, my friend, if the years were only a few less!"

"Theodora!" cried Zoe suddenly; "you won't go away on a journey *now?*"

Theodora, who was bending over one of the extra editions of the evening papers, looked up quickly. "Of course not! How could I?" And as she spoke, she passed her arm through her husband's who was standing beside her.

"Metro!" asked Manelli suddenly, "did you get any rank when you served? Are you a corporal?"

"More than that! I was a sergeant. And you?"

"No, I am only a private." And he saluted him laughingly. "What are your orders, Sergeant?"

Miss Burney caught at Nasso's hand. "And is it quite certain, then?"

"Quite, quite, Miss Burney, 'darlint'!"

No one had ever found fault with the little Irishwoman's English, but as she looked at the glowing faces around her, she lapsed instinctively into the speech of her native Ballygowan, as she tried hard to swallow back her tears. "God be wid the days!"

PART IV

CHAPTER XXIX

By October there was tense excitement everywhere, yet never had the city been more orderly. Very little shouting or demonstrations; a little quicker rising to salute the "Blue-and-White" flag, as it passed borne along at the change of guards at the Palace; a look at its waving folds, such as one might give to some one for whom a sudden crisis had revealed deeper tenderness.

The streets, of course, were full of khaki-clad soldiers. The detachments which left daily to join the armies in Epirus and Thessaly were followed to the very platforms of the stations, and to the very water's edge at Piræus, by all the mothers, and wives, and old people, and children belonging to the men, and no one thought of preventing them. Perhaps, if the mothers and wives had wept, and wailed, and torn their hair, it might have been forbidden; but there was a grand courage everywhere, from the highest in the land to the peasant women in their rough frieze coats.

The conscripts from the distant villages, in their narrow white *foustanellas*, or their goatskin capotes, alighted in an almost uninterrupted stream from the crowded third-class carriages and filled the stations to overflowing.

Costa Manelli had told Theodora that he had seen a man in the livery of one of the big hotels approach a group of them, and ask with mock solemnity, "Any one for the Grande Hôtel, gentlemen?" But he did not enjoy his joke as much as he had expected, for a fair, sunburned lad in a shepherd's cape turned on him, and answered for the rest, with utmost gravity, "We shall not need

your hotel, Sir Captain, — for you must be a captain, at least, with all those gold stripes, — we are going to a '*grander*' one than yours! To the 'Nation's' hotel, where they will not ask us for any money either!" And as they were formed into fours and marched away, the whole station joined in the laugh at the discomfited hotel-runner.

They tramped across the town, swinging their little colored bundles, and looking around them curiously. In the smaller streets the old women sitting on the door-steps would greet them: "Welcome, lads! May you go with good luck, and return with good luck!" In the larger and more crowded streets boys ran alongside of them, and smart ladies waved their hands to them, and they smiled and nodded to all alike. And these village conscripts were only a very small part of the whole. Every day great steamers arrived from America, and Egypt, and various Mediterranean ports, crowded with reservists and volunteers: all those who had served already in the army, those who had not yet served, and many who for one reason or the other were exempt from service, and still more whose fathers for business reasons had become foreign subjects, but who could not resist the call to arms.

Many were hard-working men who had themselves paid the expenses of their journey; others who had never handled a gun in their lives; but they all came. One heard the same words from all lips: "Since it is for the need of our country!"

"Our country!" It echoed through the air, that brief, beautiful word "Patris," as it has echoed for so many centuries through the streets and the heights of Athens.

Theodora had come out one afternoon with Metro, to make some last purchases for his knapsack. He was kept all morning up at the Infantry Barracks drilling new conscripts, and thereby refreshing his own memory.

He had not yet received his marching orders, but every day more troops were being dispatched to the front, and it was best to be quite ready, for the summons might come at any hour.

He looked well in his khaki uniform, with his double sergeant's stripe. Like all men inclined to be untidy in their dress, it gave him a more compact and well-groomed air. As they came out of a small grocer's shop at the top of Stadium Street with a packet of compressed meat lozenges which Theodora had been advised to get, they came face to face with the Manellis, father and son, who were coming down from the Square.

Costa was, of course, also in uniform, and they all laughed as he stopped short and saluted Metro's superior grade with military precision.

"Sergeant! Have you any commands for me?"

"The sergeant's wife has," said Theodora. She had a tinge of color in her cheeks and the listlessness of the previous months seemed entirely a thing of the past. "And those are, that you give us the very latest news instantly; coming from the Square, you may know more than we do."

"Well, they do say that the fleet sails to-morrow."

"Really! But that is great news! Are you sure, Costa?"

"Not sure at all. The evening papers do not confirm the tidings officially, but of course they may not have been allowed to do so. The press is kept in good order nowadays."

"Metro, I must congratulate you on your friend Andriotti's appointment," said Professor Manelli, rather huskily. "When we first began to employ him as a lawyer, six or seven years ago, he was practically unknown, and now Minister of Arts and Crafts! That is rather fine, you know." He cleared his throat.

"Thank you, yes; I always expected he would 'ar-

rive,' as the French say. He has brains above the average."

"Uncle," said Theodora looking at the pale, tired face, "Costa is perfectly right; you really do smoke too much; your voice is very bad to-day."

"But I have lessened my usual quantity of cigarettes," he protested with his whimsical little smile. "I consider myself a most obedient parent!"

"I believe," said Costa, shaking his head, "that he has cut off three or perhaps four cigarettes on twenty-five or thirty a day!"

"Leave my tiresome ailments alone! This is not the moment for them. See! Look there! Now we shall have authentic news of the fleet." And as he spoke Nasso Lara was upon them.

Nasso, in his lieutenant's uniform, almost incredibly good to look at, beaming with excitement, strode hurriedly through the crowd, though he found time to smile as well as to return the awkward salute of a young peasant soldier. He did not give them time for any questions.

"It's true! It's quite true! We are off to-morrow afternoon! I have just come from the Ministry of Marine. Wish me good luck, and a speedy brush with the enemy, all of you!"

"The first, with all our hearts," said Costa; "but are the two synonymous?"

"Of course they are!" cried the lad indignantly. "Do you think we are off for a coasting trip? The King himself is coming down to Phaleron to give us a send-off."

Theodora's throat tightened a little as she looked at Nasso; he was the first to be going.

"Well, my friends! Well!" A deep voice sounded behind them. "And what unhoped-for times are these?"

They turned to find old General Kardanis smiling at them through his white mustache. He shook hands with

all, and holding Costa's hand last, looked him over quizzically.

"Well, my dear anti-military friend, has the net gathered you in also? To think that I should live to see you in this barbarous man-killing uniform!"

Costa saluted the old man. "In this war, my general, which is above all a man-*saving* war, you would see me in uniform, even had the net not gathered me in."

The general clapped him on the shoulder. "Ah, that is the right spirit! I knew it was all words!"

Costa smiled and did not dispute the point.

"You have received no orders yet? You do not know when you start?"

"Not exactly; but from what I have heard I gather that my detachment is for the islands; we shall probably follow the fleet pretty closely."

"And you?" asked the old man, turning to Nasso; "when do you join your ship?"

"Almost at once, my general. I am off now to my uncle's to tell them. We have to be on board to-night."

"How good that sounds!" cried the old soldier. "Devil take the years! If it had only been ten years ago, I might still have been leaving with the rest. Bad luck, don't you call it?"

"Devilish bad luck, my general!" And Nasso grasped the old man's hand in both of his. "But we'll bring you back a bigger Greece to make up for it!"

"Amen! Amen to that!" And the old man patted him on the shoulder as he spoke.

Farewells were exchanged and they dispersed, Nasso to the Laras', Metro joining the Manellis who were bound for a congratulatory visit to the new Minister, and Theodora, who was returning home with her parcels, walking beside the old general who was also going in that direction.

As they were crossing the Kolonaki Square, they came

upon a group of six young soldiers, standing together and looking inquiringly at the passers-by. Their uniforms were quite new, and had evidently been made to fit them. One of them approached, saluted, and inquired in purely Parisian French whether the gentleman or the lady could kindly direct them to the general post-office; they had asked their way, he added smiling, at various shops, but had not been able to make themselves understood. General Kardanis gave the necessary directions very carefully.

As they walked on, Theodora looked back over her shoulder. "I wonder what they are? Can they be French volunteers?"

"I think I can tell you," said the old general: "I looked at their faces and they are not foreigners."

Theodora could see that he was much moved.

"They come from abroad; they have probably been born and brought up there by parents careless enough not even to have taught them their own language, but they are Greeks all the same, and at the first call of real need the blood has spoken and they are here. They will probably meet with many difficulties on account of their ignorance of the language, with many hardships which will seem far worse to them than to our men, but at all costs they *will* serve their country. God be with them!" And there was a note of reverence in his voice.

In the mean while Nasso, who had been stopped on the way by more friends than he could count, all anxious to wish him good luck and a safe return, had at last reached the house in the Kiphissia Road. His uncle and his Aunt Virginia were out.

"You must give them all sorts of messages from me," he told Zoe. "Say how *very* vexed I was to miss them, but that I simply *have* to be down before dark."

There was a silence; they did not seem to have much to say.

"The King is coming down to see us off," volunteered Nasso at last.

"Is he? Will he make a speech?"

"Oh, I suppose so; yes, sure to."

"How long can you stay?"

"Well, I must take the six o'clock train."

"Then I'll tell Yanni to bring you some tea."

"What a good idea; do!"

She rang the bell and ordered tea and toast and fresh butter and some little almond cakes that he liked and rose preserves.

"How nice!" said Nasso, emptying a small table in preparation for the coming tray; "but I thought the rose preserves were for company only, or for occasions."

"Well, this is — rather — an occasion."

And then Zoe suddenly put her head down on her arms and began crying.

Nasso looked dismayed; this was not at all in the programme. He was beside her in a minute, stroking her hair, begging her not to cry, and repeating over and over again that he *had* to go, and that she must keep thinking of the grand reception every one would give the fleet when it came back, triumphant.

But Zoe was not in the mood to be comforted. "Leave me alone, Nasso! Of course I know you must go; of course I know you're delighted to go; and of course I should be furious if they had not sent you among the first! I'm not crying for you!" And she dabbed her eyes with a very moist handkerchief and choked back her tears. "Don't flatter yourself! It's only the work all these days at the ambulance classes, and the constant excitement, and all that. Cannot I have nerves as well as other people? Oh, go now! Go away! Don't stand there staring at me like an idiot and patting my head!"

Nasso crossed his arms on his breast and stood a pace

away. "There! I am not touching you, and my eyes are fixed on the ceiling. But I must say it is hard luck that the one and only time I have a chance of posing for the young and noble hero starting for the war, — don't you remember what old Anneza used to sing: —

"'The day of the War is dawning
And a hero so brave and so fair!'

And just when I am fancying myself in the character, to be told not to look like an idiot, and that the tears of my fair cousin are not for me! Believe me, this strikes harder than any Turkish bullet!"

Zoe laughed a little hysterically, and springing up caught hold of his arm. "Poor hero! Don't worry! They are for you right enough!"

Then the tray was brought in and she sat down and poured out tea for him, and spread the toast with lots of fresh white butter just as he liked it.

"You must have some too, Zoe!"

"Of course I'm going to; did you think all that pile was for you?"

"When we have taken the islands and all the fighting is over," said Nasso, digging a spoon deeply down into the rose preserves, "I shall bring you some of those special preserves the island women make, that you can never get so good here. You know, those little green lemons in syrup, and those tiny whole apples from Chios. I know Polymnia has told Costa to bring her all he can get."

"But how does he know — ?"

"Oh, he knows pretty surely that his detachment is to be used as a landing force for the islands; that is the beauty of having inside information, you see. He was telling General Kardanis just now that they will be leaving soon after we do. If I am sent in command of some of the landing party, he may be under me! Won't

that be fun? I wish we could have had Metro too; but I fancy he is bound for Epirus. There!" — as he got up from the table — "if our cook on board does n't give us a good dinner to-night, *I* shan't mind so much. Now I am going into the kitchen to say good-bye to Calliope and the others; they expect it, you know."

When he returned to the library for his cap the tray was still there. He picked up the glass jar of rose preserves and held it up. "We've not left much; look here, you'd better put it away and keep it for me if I come back all right."

Zoe seized hold of him furiously. "*When*, not if! *When! When!*"

And once more she fell to sobbing, her head leaning against the wooden pillars of the tall fireplace.

"When, of course! When! Oh, *what* a fool I am!"

But Zoe went on sobbing and seemed as though she would never stop.

Then Nasso had a brilliant inspiration. "Look here, Zoe! I forgot to tell you; I had a lot of expense getting ready, and they tell me it is pretty necessary to have a little loose cash with one. You know I hate asking you, but would you — could you — ?"

Zoe lifted her head, and her eyes shone with pleasure through her tears. "Oh, Nasso! Will you, really? Oh, you're a dear!" And she turned round and hurried out of the room and up the stairs as quickly as she could manage.

Almost at once she was back with two notes of a hundred drachmæ in her hand and two of twenty-five each. "How lucky, father brought me my money yesterday! Will this be enough?"

"Enough! My dear girl! Give me the two twenty-five notes; or at most one of the hundreds. It will be more than ample."

"No! No! Nasso! Please take it all! *Please!* You

never know how difficult it may be to send more by post. Do, Nasso!"

"All right! Stuff it into this pocket! Let me try what it feels like to be a millionaire for once in a way!"

And two minutes later he was running down the marble steps bareheaded, his face glowing with excitement, waving his cap until the very last moment when the great iron gates clanged behind him.

CHAPTER XXX

It was just before noon on a Sunday in the Manellis' big, cozy sitting room. Theodora, who with Zoe had been busy all morning at the headquarters of the Soldiers' Help League, sorting and dividing and packing up bales and parcels for the front had dropped in to inquire about her uncle. Monsieur Arnoux, having had Anthi for a walk "all by herself," had brought her here by appointment to meet her mother; and on the doorstep they had met Metro triumphantly bringing the last special editions with the news of the battle and taking of Yannitsa.

When the buzz of excited talk and delighted comments had a little subsided, Monsieur Arnoux, who was standing by the window watching the newsboys as they ran shouting down the street, remarked quietly: "Yes, your Prince decidedly believes in what Curione said to Julius Cæsar; 'Delay is injurious to any one who is fully prepared for action.'"

Professor Manelli, sitting in the big armchair with a shawl over his knees, nodded his head without speaking; and Metro said: "I had forgotten that passage; true, it fits in well."

Certainly there had been no delays. Three days after the declaration of war, the frontier had been crossed and Elassona taken. Then close on that had followed the battle and victory of Sarandaporon, and almost at once afterwards had come the taking of Verria and Kozani. Then Grevena and Aikaterini. The fleet was already in possession of Lemnos, Thasos, Imbros, and Samothrace, and the Fetich-Boulen had been sunk four

days ago. Small wonder that the greeting on all lips should constantly be the one of "unhoped-for things."

Only Zoe was never astonished; there was a great gladness in her face and bearing at every new victory, at the joyful tidings of every fresh village or island liberated from the Turkish yoke. Just now, she had got the special edition of the newspaper on the table before her, and was reading with avidity, her fingers in her ears. Metro, pencil in hand, was bending over the large war map, and showing the old Professor and Monsieur Arnoux the exact road which part of the Seventh Division had taken to reach Aikaterini.

"Andriotti told me just now," he said, "that by this evening they hope to know exactly what General Kalari is doing."

"Ah-noo!" cried Anthi from a distant corner of the room; "Ah-noo! He is waving bose flags! Look at him!"

"What!" cried the men wheeling round; and then they all began to laugh. On one of the sofas Polymnia's seven-months-old son was lying on his back kicking his fat little legs in the air; his sisters and Anthi had placed a tiny flag in each tightly clenched fist, and he was waving them vigorously.

"Oh, Ah-noo, does n't he wave zem well?"

But Monsieur Arnoux had not the time to express his admiration, for at that moment the door was flung open and Costa rushed in, his hat still on his head, closely followed by Petro Dandolo.

There was one general cry: "What is it? More news?"

"Yes," gasped Costa, breathing heavily; "Preveza has capitulated; four hundred and fifty prisoners!"

"Is it true?"

"It is official. I was at the Ministry; Andriotti showed me the telegram." Then, throwing his hat on a sofa beside him and paying no heed to the questions showered on him, he walked straight up to where Zoe had started

to her feet on hearing the news, and stood before her. "It is not six months since I laughed at what I called your prophecies! I do not think you, yourself, hoped to have them fulfilled so soon! You said then that all the sacrifices the people would be called upon to make would be willing ones, and they have been joyful ones! You said the peasants, and the laborers, and the emigrants would come cheerfully as soon as they were called, and they have come *before* they were called. Will you let me tell you now, before every one, how more than right and far-seeing you were, and how blind and wrong I was?"

The tears welled up in Zoe's eyes; she tried to speak, but could only nod her head repeatedly as she grasped the hand held out to her.

"When are you off, Costa?" Dandolo called across the room.

"I do not know exactly," answered the latter; "but it cannot be long now; we were to have followed the fleet almost immediately. I expect we are being kept for Mytilene."

"My regiment," said Metro quietly, "leaves to-morrow by sea; probably for Aikaterini as our first stopping-place."

Theodora, who had been talking to her uncle, wheeled round. "To-morrow!"

"Yes, the ship leaves Piræus about three or four in the afternoon."

"But, how? When? You never told me!"

"I did not know myself; I met one of our officers but just now, and he stopped to tell me."

"What very short notice!" said Polymnia.

"On the contrary; some men have known only an hour before starting. It does not take long to pack a knapsack and roll up an overcoat. And we have had everything ready days ago; have we not, Theodora?"

"Yes," she said, "everything is ready."

When they were all leaving the house together, Dandolo asked Zoe if she had received any letters from Nasso.

"Yes, I had one. Such a very Nasso-like letter! He tells of all the fun they had on board, and all the songs the other officers made him sing. He writes, too, that on one of the islands when the landing party which he commanded routed the Turks from their position, our men found an enormous caldron of pilaf half cooked; three lambs roasted whole, and plenty of loaves hot from the oven; so they let the pilaf finish cooking, and had a feast. Nasso," she added, laughing, "invited the correspondent of an English newspaper to join them, and when this man asked him what he should write about that day's engagement, Nasso told him he could say that there was not the slightest doubt that the Turks make splendid pilaf, much better than we do!"

"That is Nasso all over. And what did the Englishman say?"

"Oh, he laughed, and asked if they fought better also. And Nasso answered that he left him judge of that!"

The next day Metro had decided that Theodora should wait at home for some time after he had left the house, and then drive down to Omonoia Station in good time to see them off by the two o'clock train. This would save her the long standing about in the square of the Infantry Barracks, and the rush for a carriage in which to follow them to the station after they had marched off.

He absolutely forbade her coming down to Piræus: the steamer might not leave on time; no friends or relations would be allowed on board; the return trains to Athens would be overcrowded and there would be no one to look after her. To Anthi, of course, he said goodbye before leaving the house. She was invited for that same afternoon to the birthday party of one of her

Zappion Garden friends, and she explained to her father that Bettina had told her that there would be no big "birfday cake wiz candles because the poor soldiers wanted all the money, only lots of tsourekakia wiz cuw-wants in zem," and Petro's mademoiselle would show them some new dancing games. She had bought a small packet of chocolate with her own money which she insisted on putting into his knapsack herself. Then, with her arms tightly clasped about his neck and her pink cheek against his brown one, she said: "And you know, baba, you never finished the Pasha stowy."

"Are you sure?"

"Don't you wemember the little black slave had only found the one gween slipper?"

"Never mind, my little maid, I shall finish it when I come back."

"You won't forget, baba."

"No fear!"

As they went downstairs, Theodora's arm through his, she said: "The child will miss you."

"She has you."

"No one ever quite makes up for the other. It is not the moment," she added, "to think of one's self, but for me I know that I shall miss you every hour of the day."

Metro tightened his lips and a rather curious look came into his eyes. "It will not be for long, I hope. See what we have done already!"

"Are you sure you have everything you want?"

"I have all that I can carry; *everything I want*" — and he smiled a little — "would be too heavy a load on a long march." He shook hands with Triantafyllia who had come down to open the door. "Take good care of your mistress if you want me to be pleased with you."

"Be easy, Kyrie; she shall lack for nothing."

And he walked hurriedly down to the Kiphissia Road without looking behind him.

Theodora set out soon after one o'clock to find a carriage, but there was a great scarcity in the higher quarters of the town, as most horses had been requisitioned for the army, and the few vehicles that were left congregated in the more populous centers, so that she was obliged to wait for the tram to take her as far as the Palace.

From there, nervously glancing every moment at the watch on her wrist, she passed through the gates of the Royal Gardens, cut off the corner by the guard-house, almost ran across the open space before the Palace, crossed the road under the pepper trees and came out opposite the Hôtel de la Grande Bretagne. There, where a long, waiting line usually stood, there was not a carriage to be seen. She looked at her watch again. It was fourteen minutes to two! Should she take the Stadium Street tramcar? No! it stopped too often; and she could see through the trees that it had not even come down from the Square. Could she walk down to the station on time? Scarcely. And even if she just managed it there would be sure to be a crowd, and it would be difficult to get inside.

There was a pulse beating violently in her throat, and she looked helplessly from side to side.

Suddenly there came the "klip-klop" of horses on asphalt and an empty landau turned the corner by the Hôtel d'Angleterre. She rushed wildly toward it, but two old women stood talking just in her way, and though she pushed one of them off the sidewalk without a word of excuse, a man had risen from a table before Zavoriti's, had turned the handle of the carriage door, and was in the act of stepping inside just as Theodora came up.

She laid her hand on his coat-sleeve; and her breath came in heavy gasps. "Please! Please, Kyrie! Let me have the carriage! You see there is no other way; and I must be at the Omonoia at two. The soldiers are leaving, and my husband — "

The man turned round and looked at her; he was fat and common-looking, with unshaven cheeks, and a frowning expression; but he stepped back on to the pavement instantly. "Get in! Get in at once! You have no time to lose!" He banged the door, and gave the order: "To the Omonoia Station, like lightning!" Then, as the driver was gathering up his reins, he bent toward Theodora and added: "Good luck to your man, and a safe return!"

"Thank you! I thank you so much!" But her voice seemed to her to come from a distance.

The driver whipped up his horses and they tore down Stadium Street at a great pace, dispersing pedestrians right and left with loud cries of "Embros! Embros!" Theodora could not lean back; she felt somehow that by sitting upright on the edge of the seat, in a tense attitude, she was helping the speed of the horses. As they turned down by the National Bank she looked at her watch once more. Only five minutes left! In another minute she sprang out of the carriage at the door of the station and throwing one word to the driver, "Wait!" began forcing her way through the crowd.

From the top of the long flight of steps she used the talisman which had already proved so powerful. "Let me pass, please! Make a little room for me, I beg you! My husband is down there; he is just leaving."

And as all the friends and relations of the departing men were already below, and the steps were lined at this hour with outsiders, waiting to see the start of the train, every one lent a helping hand. Way was made through the thickly packed mass as though by magic. At the very last steps, where the crowd was the thickest, two elderly men lifted her off her feet and passed her over the railing to the platform.

Almost at once a soldier grasped her arm; this was no time for ceremony. It was Yoryi, Metro's right-hand

man at the Museum, Triantafyllia's brother-in-law. "Come, Kyria! He is there, the master, near the first carriage." And as he pushed a way for her through the dense crowd, he explained: "He is a sergeant, you see, and he may not leave his men."

The railway carriages were already crammed full of soldiers. Any one familiar with Athens would have recognized a strange medley of types, workmen, peasants, bank clerks, university students, shopmen, and many bearers of the best-known Greek names. But even outwardly there was a curious lack of class distinctions: it was not the uniform; it was not even the influence of the same general sentiment; it was rather that all seemed to express that sentiment in almost the same way. There seemed not one sad face among all who were leaving; not one which was not smiling and joyous; not one voice which was not ringing with the ardent desire to be there at the front, to join those who had already made good, to wipe out the humiliation of 1897!

Most of them seemed scarcely to take heed of the mothers, the wives, the sisters, holding on to their arms or their hands, raising themselves up to the steps of the carriages; they seemed scarcely to hear the God-speeds, the last recommendations, the advice to take all the care of themselves that might be possible. They shouted until they were drunk with their songs and their cries.

Even Metro seemed flushed, excited, a little less himself than usual. He drew Theodora to the edge of the platform near the engine. "I was anxious."

"There were no carriages — I ran — and a man gave me his."

"You will write to me — often! I hope we shall receive our letters. You had better give them to Andriotti."

"Yes, yes, I will give them to him."

"And you will take care — "

"You must not be troubled about us, Metro! Since

Dr. Paschali is working at the hospitals here, if Anthi should have the least thing — "

"It is not the child! You are there to take good care of her; but who will take care of you?"

"All men to your seats!"

The order rang sharply through the station, and from the far end of the long train the sliding doors of the carriages were one by one being pulled to and closed.

"Good-bye, my wife!" He held his face pressed very closely to hers for a second. "Take care of yourself when I shall not be there!"

She looked into his eyes and smiled. "It will not be for long, Metro?"

"No, no; not for long; but you must remember to take care!"

There was one more last order: "To your seats! To your seats!"

Metro jumped in, the last door was closed, and the train moved slowly away from the midst of all the waving arms, and all the bared heads, and all the clamor of good wishes and farewells.

Theodora waited a little, until most of the people had left the station. When she reached the top of the long flight of steps, she found three women with shawls over their heads, gathered pityingly round a fourth who was sitting on a bench, her face hidden in her arms, rocking to and fro and sobbing wildly.

Something in the outline of the figure struck her as familiar. "Marika! Is it you?"

The woman recognized the voice and struggled to her feet: the tears were streaming down her cheeks.

"Why, Marika! You must not cry like that!"

"But, my Yoryi — " began the poor creature.

"Your Yoryi has gone, of course, with all the other brave lads, to fight for our country. I saw him just now, and wished him a safe return."

"May God and the Holy Virgin hearken to you, Kyria!" And the trembling lips could scarcely form the words. "But I am afraid! Oh, I am afraid!"

"Marika!" Theodora's voice was grave and she looked at the other women around her as she spoke. "Have you thought how ashamed you would be if Yoryi had not gone? If he had tried to hide somewhere? If he had pretended to be ill, and had stayed at home when all the others went to fight? You must remember that he will help to free many, many people, Greeks like ourselves, from the Turks who ill-treat them and make slaves of them. Oh, hush, Marika! Hush! You must not cry so! See! I also have just said good-bye to my husband, and — I was proud to let him go, since our country required him. Don't you hear me, Marika?"

The woman lifted a swollen, tear-sodden face. "Yes, yes, Kyria; it must be true since you say so: you have much learning. But it is my man who has gone! My man! And who knows if I shall ever see him again!" And once more she began to rock to and fro.

Theodora tried another subject. "Your little boy, Marika, Stamati; is he well?"

"He is well," answered the woman dully; then, remembering her manners, she added: "He salutes you."

"You must bring him to me some day; I should like to see him; he was such a pretty baby!"

"I will bring him, Kyria."

"I will send Triantafyllia to see you to-morrow, and to tell you what day to come."

"Thank you, Kyria."

"Would you like me to drive you home now?"

Marika shrank back a little. "Thank you for your goodness, but Kyra Polyxene, here, is my neighbor, and we shall go home together."

"Yes, yes," chimed in a gray-haired woman bending over her. "Come, let us go! Crying is no use."

"Good-bye, then, Marika." And Theodora got into the waiting carriage and was driven home.

She spent a quiet afternoon, finished a letter to her Uncle Pandeli in London, and listened to Anthi's account of the birthday party and the new French *ronde* she had learned. After her solitary dinner she settled herself in the sitting room with the September numbers of the "Atlantic Monthly" and "Harper's," which Katharine Larcher had lent her. But she did not stay there long. The weather had changed, she could hear the rain beating against the closed shutters and fell to wondering whether Metro was likely to be under shelter, or whether the non-commissioned officers would have to stay on deck with the men.

Then the room began to feel lonely in a curious way; the clock ticked too loudly and obtrusively, and she changed her seat so as not to have the door leading into the empty, dark dining room behind her. At last she rang for Triantafyllia, told her to close everywhere, and gathering up her magazines went into her bedroom.

It was better here; the rain could be heard less than on the other side of the house and the room was more cheerful, lighter-colored, and more compact. She read for a little while longer, then she undressed quickly and went to bed, where she fell asleep almost at once.

She dreamed that she was once again seeing Metro off at the station; but it was a transfigured station, — endless and lofty, more like the interior of a Gothic cathedral. The King was there and the Crown Prince, and a mass of people in bright uniforms, and all the place was hung with blue-and-white flags, on each of which was a golden star; this, some one said, was the sign of victory — and she found it quite natural. Trains full of soldiers and sailors were gliding away one after the other; and as one of them passed close beside her, she saw that the engine-driver was Petro Dandolo, and that

next to him stood Nasso, holding out a dish, and as he was whirled past, he called out to her, "This is the Turkish pilaf!" But Metro had not left; he was standing beside her holding her hand; and he also was transfigured; his handclasp was a thing apart; the grave, tender look in his eyes thrilled her through and through, and she knew, with the sure knowledge of dreams, that to possess his love was a Godlike happiness that nothing in the world could equal.

The station changed, melted into a port, or the port had been there all the time, and it was raining heavily. The rain, which fell in continuous streams of water, splashed and beat on their faces. There was no shelter anywhere, and the lights had gone out. She could hear the rain drip, drip, dripping on the decks of a big ship which was waiting.

"And the rain is nothing," some one was saying; "later on, it changes, when it is shot out of cannons; then it changes to liquid fire and burns whatever it touches." And behind the first ship was another one, with lights and music on which the rain did not fall.

But Metro was to go in the dark ship, and be rained on, for hours and hours until the rain changed into liquid fire, because she had never known how to love him! And as he put his foot on the gangway, he looked back at her, with the saddest look that ever was in a man's eyes. "I go, my wife! I must go forever, and ever, and ever, because you did not know how to love me!" And she stretched out her arms to him, screaming with agony: "No! No! No! It is my man! My man! Metro, Metro! you must not go! I know you now! I love you now!" She cried the words aloud, and the cry awoke her.

Her heart was beating in quick throbs and her face was wet with tears. "Metro!" she called and instinctively stretched out her hand across the narrow space to the bed beside her.

The undisturbed silence and darkness of the room brought her back to the present with a little shock.

She threw off the bedclothes and turned up the electric light. The last words of her dream beat in her brain like the haunting words of a song: "I know you now! I love you now!"

Suddenly she pressed her hands to her lips, and the pupils of her eyes dilated. She was not dreaming now! Was this the awakening from a dream of years?

Why did the words mean something new — something that towered over all? Once more she repeated them. "Metro! Metro! Oh, Metro!"

She turned an unbelieving face to the emptiness of the room, and her arms unconsciously opened. Then she let them fall by her sides, and a great shiver went through her.

She understood now! And Metro was sailing farther and farther away every moment, and she had watched him go quite calmly! She had thought herself tender and wifely when she had seen to his comfort, and when she had said, "I shall miss you." She had felt the superiority which the self-control of her class and the feeling of patriotism gave her, over the ignorant, sobbing woman who only wanted her man! Oh, fool! fool! fool!

And the morrow would dawn and other morrows after it, and he would not be there, and it would be many, many weary days before he came back — *if* he came back!

She picked up the photograph in uniform which Metro had had taken lately to please her, and held it close to her face. "My Metro," she whispered, "you said it would not be long, — and it will be very long. I want you! Oh, I want you!"

Had he ever been deaf to her wants? Would not the very intensity of her longing reach him through space and bring him back?

Surely this empty ache could not continue many days! It was not possible; it *could* not!

She wanted to hold him in her arms, and say baby words to him; to call him her Soul, and her golden Love. The words he had used sometimes and which — God forgive her — she had often thought foolish and puerile! What had *she* ever known of the love that forces tender words to the lips? She wanted to stroke his hair, she wanted to hold his hands against her lips and kiss the palms of them softly. Yes, she, Theodora, who had always been the one to submit to caresses half unwillingly.

What was she that she could have lived thirty years and never known herself?

She sank on to the floor and let her head drop on to the seat of a low armchair, then threw her arms round an old velvet cushion, and as she clasped it tightly, her body was shaken with desperate sobs.

She lay there some time; then she drew her bare feet under her nightgown, and shivered violently. What had he said? "Take care of yourself when I shall not be there!"

She rose at once and climbed into bed, pulling the coverings well around her; then she groped under her pillow, turned out the light, and lay awake in the dark.

CHAPTER XXXI

SALONICA was taken! The great news had begun to spread through the city — all the church bells were ringing out the joyful tidings — and a river of people had flowed steadily and ceaselessly from the most distant quarters down to the great centers. Traffic was congested; the tram-cars were all stopped. In Stadium Street it was impossible to distinguish between the pavements and the middle of the road; it was one thick mass of people, with one cry, one shout, one word on all lips, "Salonica! Salonica! Salonica!"

It was true. The ancient capital of the Thessalonians had surrendered! Salonica was Greek once more!

And sober citizens laughed, and wept, and even embraced one another, and strangers clasped hands, and asked one another, "Can you believe it?"

And blue-and-white flags were hung over balconies and every now and then great shouts went up: "Long live the Crown Prince! Long live Venizelos! Long live the Nation!"

And one deaf old man, after he had succeeded in making a boy tell him the reason of all the excitement, lifted up shaking arms and cried in the words of Simeon: "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, O Lord!"

And some, remembering Easter, cried out, "Christ is risen!" And others answered, "No, it is Greece that is risen to-day!"

In the thickest of the crowd Monsieur Arnoux was piloting Theodora past the big corner bookshop between the Square and Stadium Street.

She held his arm because she knew it pleased him, but it was just as often she who was the helper. It was impossible to avoid pushing and being pushed. But no one seemed to mind and no eyes met that did not smile at one another.

Monsieur Arnoux had been among the first to hear the great news, and he had gone straight to Theodora's with it, and, as he had found her sitting alone with a piece of sewing in her hands at which she was not working, he had insisted on taking her out with him, to show her, as he said, what Athens looked like when it had gone mad with joy.

At first she had not cared to go, but it had done her good, and she looked flushed and pleased as they made their way very slowly through the crowd, wild with pride and excitement at the success of their Prince and their army.

"Do you hope for news soon?"

She knew what news Monsieur Arnoux meant without asking. "It all depends on how long the letters from the front take to come. I know that Metro will write at the first possible moment."

There was a note of possession in her voice as she pronounced her husband's name that made Monsieur Arnoux look at her curiously. "Yes," he said quietly; "that is certain."

In a moment she began in a lower voice: "Monsieur Arnoux, do you know, there is a little French verse that has been running in my head all these days; and now in all this crowd, still more."

"What verse?"

"Some one wrote it about Paris, I think, when the woman he loved had left it: 'En seul être te manque, et tout est dépeuplé!'"

Instinctively Monsieur Arnoux pressed the arm which was passed through his, closer to him. "Ah, my child!

How I understand!" Then the next second he said hurriedly, "Pardon, madame!"

Theodora shook her head. "Why do you say that? I like to hear you call me, 'Mon enfant.' Am I not Metro's wife, and do you not consider him as your son? And you and I," she added with a quick lift of her eyes, "we know how good it is to be his 'father' and his wife!"

In the dense crowd they were absolutely unnoticed. Monsieur Arnoux lifted the hand that was on his arm to his lips. Ever since the age of reason, he had always considered himself a freethinker, but as he did so, he muttered, "Dieu soit loué!"

They had reached the small square round the equestrian statue of Kolokotronis by this time, and wedged in that part of the crowd that was coming in the opposite direction they caught sight of Costa Manelli with Andriotti.

The former made signs to them. When they came within speaking distance he called out: "These are beginning to be not only 'unhoped-for things,' as the people call them, but undreamt-of!"

Then, when they came close enough to clasp hands, Monsieur Arnoux said to Andriotti: "Monsieur le Ministre, you must feel very proud to-day!"

"I?" laughed Andriotti; "what has the Minister of Arts and Crafts to do with a great victory? Distinctly 'the fifth wheel to the carriage,' as you French say. All the same, of course, I am delighted that it should happen just at this time, when I form a part, however unimportant, of the Ministry."

"You have just come from Piræus, did you say?" asked Theodora of Costa; "there is such a noise, I cannot hear you clearly?"

"Yes; I went to see my brother-in-law off to India again. Polymnia could not come because of the baby."

"Oh, has Nico left? I thought his steamer was not due until next week."

"The Government requisitioned that steamer for troops, and he had to take the Russian one which left to-day."

"What a day to leave! Did he hear the great news, at least, before starting?"

"Yes; we heard it at the station going down. Nico was saying that if he were only ten years younger he would send a telegram to the Ralli Brothers, saying, 'Put some one else in my place; I am off to the front!'"

"How is your father to-day?"

"Better. Still very hoarse, but no fever. In fact he insisted on going out quite alone after luncheon."

"And you?" asked Monsieur Arnoux; "you do not know yet when you will have to leave?"

"Yes; I think it is decided for next Monday. Andriotti was just telling me that he heard that reinforcements are required for the islands. The Turks in Chios are very obstinate."

But after all it was not for Monday; though Costa's detachment was warned to be ready to start at an hour's notice, it was still in Athens on that day. In the morning, however, he heard from one of his officers that the troop ship in which they were to sail was due to arrive in Piræus on the following Friday, and that they would sail for Chios positively on the Saturday.

Late on the Monday afternoon Costa let himself into their house with his latchkey, and was running straight upstairs to his room when his father called out to him from the study, the door of which was ajar.

"Is that you, Costa?"

"Yes, father; do you want anything?"

"Come here a minute, will you?"

Costa ran down again, and went into the study. Professor Manelli was sitting at his writing table, with his arms lying upon it.

"What is it, father?"

The Professor looked round; his face had been pale all these last weeks; just now it seemed shrunk and smaller.

"Sit down!" he whispered huskily.

But instead of sitting down Costa stood beside him and laid his hand on his shoulder. "You don't feel any fever coming on again?"

"No, I think not." He dipped the pen he was holding into the inkstand before him, and letting the pen rest on the blotting-paper watched the drop spread. At last, without looking up he said: "Last Friday — the day the news came about Salonica — "

"Yes?"

"When I went out after luncheon, I went to see Dr. Varvati."

"What did he say?"

The Professor made another blot on the paper and turning round in his chair looked up at his son and shook his head.

"Did he examine you? Did he find anything — serious?"

"Yes."

"Not — you don't mean — ?"

"Yes, — cancer; for some time now I have been afraid of it."

"I don't believe it!" burst out Costa. "Varvati is an alarmist! a pessimist!"

"But a very clever man."

"The cleverest man may be mistaken sometimes. We will see others; we will have a consultation at once. You are *not* to believe such a thing!" And his voice sounded almost threatening.

The old Professor pushed aside his chair and stood up. "This was Friday; on Saturday I wrote a word to Paschali; he called round for me, we stopped for Varvati, and went on together to Dr. Othonopoulos's clinic."

"And — ?"

"Both the others agreed with Varvati."

There was a silence; then Costa, frowning heavily, asked: "What do they advise?"

"An operation."

"When?"

"On Thursday morning."

Costa went toward the bookcase, and stood there with his back turned to his father.

The old man followed him. "Listen, my boy. We must not pre-decide that the case is desperate. Othonopoulos is a wonderful surgeon; I may have many years before me yet. But there is one thing I want you to do for me; will you?"

Costa swallowed once or twice and nodded.

"Your sister must not know beforehand; nursing the baby as she is, it might be very bad, both for her and the child. We shall say that I am going to the clinic for a day or two, for some special cauterizations which cannot be done at home. But — everything must be foreseen — and she must not be left alone, in case — If only Nico had not started for Calcutta! But as it is — could you manage not to leave Athens on Saturday?"

"Of course I can. Andriotti will arrange it for me."

Professor Manelli hesitated. "Shall you explain to him — "

"I shall explain nothing. Andriotti is a capital fellow, but he cannot hold his tongue."

"But then — "

"Father, don't think of it! Our troubles are heavy enough without adding more. It is perfectly simple. I shall see Andriotti to-morrow morning; Polymnia shall guess nothing. The only person I shall take into our confidence will be Theodora; we may require her help. You don't mind her?"

"No, I don't mind Theodora."

The door opened suddenly and Polymnia came in with her baby in her arms.

"Why are you in the dark here?" And she turned on the light as she spoke. The men started apart, and she looked from one to the other curiously. "What is it? What are you plotting?"

"Nothing! Nothing!" said her father. "Bring that boy here! I have not seen him to-day." And he took the child and held him up at arm's length. "You, rascal, you!"

The baby opened his mouth wide and laughed aloud, and Costa went out of the room, and shut the door behind him.

When the new Minister of Arts and Crafts walked into his private office the next morning, he found Costa Manelli waiting for him. "You are early, my friend!"

"I wanted to catch you before any one else, so I waited. The fact is there is something very important — a certain affair which makes it absolutely necessary for me to remain in Athens over Saturday. You would oblige me immensely if you could possibly get me transferred from my present regiment to one that is not leaving immediately."

Andriotti laughed. "Well, that is certainly a coincidence! You could not have asked anything easier, as it happens. Only yesterday evening I was at the War Ministry, and the chief of one of the sections asked that two trustworthy men should be detached from the troops which are leaving for the islands on Saturday and left here three or four days longer, as they may be wanted to take some important papers. So I have only to ask, as a personal favor, that you should be one of them. Will that suit you?"

"Unfortunately, no. I cannot say with certainty when I shall be able to leave. I should like, if at all possible,

to stay for the present — indefinitely." There was a short silence, and Costa continued: "I thought that perhaps with my experience of secretarial work — I might be useful; I mean with your influence you could get me placed in one of the military offices — here. I told you it was a big thing."

Andriotti looked at him curiously. "I think I can do it; though it is not very easy just now; but — "

"I know what you mean to say."

"I mean," persisted Andriotti, "that of course I would not be indiscreet for the world, but unless your affair is really of the utmost importance, do you realize that unpleasant things may be said?"

"I have taken that into consideration, but it is absolutely necessary."

"You see, it is not as though you were an unknown private soldier or other; you are a man of a well-known family, with a large circle of friends and acquaintances; every one has heard that you were leaving this week — "

"I have thought of all that; nevertheless, I shall be particularly obliged to you if you can help me to remain here."

Andriotti pushed a few papers together on his desk. "Don't say another word, my friend, you can count on me to do my best, and I think I can certainly manage it; call round again in the evening!"

"Thank you, I will." And then other people came in and Costa left.

As it happened, he did not even require to call a second time at the ministerial office. That same afternoon he received a note from Andriotti telling him that he had heard of a young soldier-clerk in one of the numerous military bureaus, who was very anxious to go to the front and had only been kept at his present work on account of his knowledge of French, as the chief of the bureau in question was one of the officers of the French military

mission, so that an exchange would be the easiest possible thing to effect. The note was very simply worded, and kept strictly to the necessary information; but Costa frowned a little as he read it. Then he thrust it into his pocket, reached for his hat, hurried down the street, caught the number 7 tram-car, and went up to Theodora's.

He found Miss Burney with her in the sitting-room, where the first fire of the season had been lighted, and Theodora, seated on the hearth-rug with her elbows on Miss Burney's knees, was reading aloud extracts from Metro's last letter.

She looked up as he entered the room and stretched out her hand to him, without rising. "How nice of you to come, Costa! Sit down and listen to what Metro writes."

Costa sat down on a chair on the other side of the fireplace, and shaded his eyes with his hand. "Go on! I want to hear it. Has he left Aikaterini?"

"Oh, long ago! He writes after ten days' alternate marching and fighting. Listen to this, Costa! How you will agree!"

And she turned over the strips of coarse, yellow packing-paper on which the letter was written, until she found the part she wanted: —

> All that one sees [Metro wrote], not only of death, of sickening wounds, of long-drawn-out pain, but of unavoidable mistakes, of needless waste of young lives, is a death-blow to any comfortable, home-bred patriotism. War, even defensive and rescuing war, such as this, must be the last extremity, the absolutely inevitable necessity, when all else has failed; as for aggressive war, it is unthinkable!

Costa nodded his head. "Yes, he is behind the scenes now."

Metro went on that it had been both better and worse than he had expected; there was far less exposure to

constant danger than he had imagined, and far more long, dreary waiting. He spoke of the terrible weariness and the callousness and indifference to all else, so naturally bred from it. "So-and-so" was killed in to-day's battle the soldiers heard. "Was he, poor fellow?" some one would say; "well, life to you, brother!" And at once followed the all-important question, "Is there any food to-night?" He told of the endless marches continuing long after the men were fit to drop, long after they would have dropped in ordinary circumstances; of the climbing over impossible rocks; of the swaying giddily along of those who were ill with fever; of the nights on the wet ground; of the dirt, the vermin, the hunger; of going the round of the distantly placed sentinels at night; of the terrific sense of responsibility, which killed sleep even after seeing that all was well for the time being and each sentinel awake at his post.

And yet [he added] I would not have missed it for anything! It is hard, of course, perhaps harder on those who are over thirty; but I think any man worth the name must be glad that he has been enabled to find out, as nothing else in the world can show him so well, how far he can depend on his nerves and his endurance. You must not think, too, that all is somber. There is plenty of story-telling and fun round the camp-fires at night. Plenty of "Attic salt" for the non-existent meat.

Theodora's voice was a little unsteady as she folded up the last slip.

Miss Burney stooped over her, and laid her hand on the paper. "What a good idea of yours, my child, to give him a fountain pen; pencil rubs out so easily, and you want to keep all these letters for Anthi, when she grows up!" Then she got up and pulled her gloves on. "I must go! I ought to have gone an hour ago. Do you want me to-morrow, Theodora?"

Theodora stood up and putting her hands on the little

woman's shoulders, looked down into her eyes. "To-morrow, and — always! When does one not want you?"

Miss Burney laughed. "That's good hearing!"

When she had left and Theodora came back into the room, Costa had not moved from his place.

"You are right," he said, looking into the fire; "there are few people one is so glad to have always 'around,' as the Americans say, as that simple, good little woman."

One of the logs in the fire suddenly fell, sending a shower of sparks into the heap of ashes below, and Costa started violently at the noise.

Theodora looked at him in surprise; and then catching sight of his face under the shading fingers, she turned sharply round. "Costa! Is anything the matter?"

"Yes," he answered dully; "everything."

She sprang to her feet. "What do you mean? What have you heard? Tell me quickly! Metro — "

He stood up also and seized both her outstretched hands. "No, my child! No! No! I have heard nothing whatever. It is — a family trouble; but I know you will be sorry, too." And his voice faltered.

"Sit down, Costa! Sit down here on the sofa beside me! Tell me, my dear! Tell me! It is always better to speak."

And he told her: told her with all the hope gone out of his voice, and all the anguish of the inevitable working in his face. "And even if he lives, what sort of a life will it be? Without a larynx probably, and with this constant sword of Damocles hanging over his head! I don't know whether — we ought to hope — "

He stopped, and Theodora did not answer. She had buried her face against his shoulder and was sobbing. "Oh, poor uncle! Poor uncle! Oh, Costa!"

And then he turned comforter. "Hush, my child! Hush! Perhaps I have shown you the worst side. Perhaps even it was selfish to tell you; but you see, with Polym-

nia as she is, there is only you of our people; and father himself wanted you to know."

Theodora disengaged herself and stood up, dabbing her eyes with her handkerchief. "You did quite right! See, I am not going to cry any more! Who knows yet? The greatest doctors have been mistaken sometimes. Come here!" She pulled a block and pencil from the writing table beside her. "Let us put down exactly what you want me to do and to get; and afterwards I will put on my hat and come home with you, and you shall keep me to dinner." Then, with the pencil poised over the paper, she asked abruptly: "And you think that you will be able to stay here for the present?"

"Yes." And he told her what Andriotti had written to him.

It was nearly dusk when they left the house together, and they met Monsieur Arnoux on the threshold. Theodora gave him her hand, and as he bent to kiss it, she said: "I will not even ask you to come in for a moment, as I am in a hurry. I am dining at my uncle's this evening. But so that I should not lose your visit, I take it on myself to ask you to come there after dinner. Don't you approve of my idea, Costa?"

Her cousin, who had kept his eyes fixed on the rapidly darkening mass of Mount Hymettus, answered with a start: "Yes, of course. Do, come, Monsieur Arnoux!"

The little old man looked curiously from one to the other. "You have had news — ?"

"Yes," answered Theodora quickly; "letters from Metro; such interesting ones! I have them with me, and will read them to you if you come to-night."

Then, while Monsieur Arnoux hesitated, for he was very precise in his notions of the "correct thing" and did not quite fancy being invited by proxy, she continued as they walked along: "My uncle is — not very well, and we shall

be glad to keep him interested with general conversation, as he must not talk much himself."

And Costa added: "You will be doing us a kindness."

"Thank you! I will come without fail. It is from his throat that monsieur your father is still suffering! But surely he ought to follow a cure!"

"He is going to begin one — on Thursday."

"Ah, that is well; at our age, one must neglect nothing."

Some one was making signs to them from a victoria coming up the Kiphissia Road. When it came a little closer, they saw it was Zoe. She called to the driver to stop, from some way off, and getting down limped toward them brandishing a letter.

"I was coming to you, Theodora. I have just had another letter from Nasso; such a funny one! And you? Have you had news?"

She nodded to the two men, and linking her arm in Theodora's she walked a few steps beside her, opening her letter and reading scraps aloud here and there.

Meanwhile, on her other side Monsieur Arnoux was telling Costa how he had lunched at the Grande Bretagne with some of the French volunteers who had joined the Garibaldians.

"They were telling me," he was saying, "how glad they are to pay back to Greece a small part of the debt France owes for your gallant aid to us in 1870. There are twenty-seven of them, and all so anxious to be sent to the front. Ah, les braves garçons! It made me feel younger only to talk to them!"

"I find," Zoe was reading from Nasso's letter, "Turkish tobacco as disagreeable to the palate as I found their pilaf agreeable. I have tried and tried and cannot smoke it; it is decidedly too strong. So, my dearest cousin, I hereby graciously permit you to send me a few boxes of Varca cigarettes. You might ask Manelli to bring the

parcel, as I am told that his regiment is coming here very soon."

"Ah, true," said Monsieur Arnoux, turning to his companion; "when do you leave?"

Zoe raised her eyes from the written pages, and waited for the answer.

It was delayed a few seconds; at last Costa said quietly: "I believe my regiment leaves on Saturday, but I have come to the conclusion that, owing to my long experience of secretarial work, and because there are naturally not many soldiers who can speak or write French, I should be much more useful in one of the military bureaus here, and as some of my officers think so too, it has been decided that I should remain for the present in Athens."

Suddenly Nasso's letter fluttered to the ground. Before any one could stoop for it, Zoe spoke in a low voice with a sharp catch of her breath: "When a man prudently prefers to remain in the capital while war is going on elsewhere, I think it matters very little, indeed, what work he does here. At least, he might announce his reason openly, and take the consequence of it, and not hide behind the pretext of being more useful than others in any Ministry or offices!"

The onslaught was so sudden, so fierce, so entirely at variance with her usual cool, impersonal manner to Manelli, that Theodora looked at her with more amazement than indignation.

Costa grew white to the lips. There was dead silence for a few seconds.

"You are right," he said at last; "I prefer to remain at home." Then, raising his hat, he would have walked on, but Zoe was beforehand.

Making a sign to the waiting coachman she took her letter from Monsieur Arnoux's hand, who had picked it up, crossed the road, and climbing alone and unaided into

the carriage, told the man sharply to drive on, while the three stood still and looked after her.

All that night Costa Manelli sat up with his father, helping him to sort and divide various papers, and all that night Zoe lay on her bed opposite the great dark windows and sobbed.

CHAPTER XXXII

Costa Manelli need not have dreaded the life his father would lead with the sword of Damocles hanging constantly over his head.

There was no suspense. The sword fell at once.

The operation took place early on Thursday morning with apparently complete success, but despite every effort to combat the shock to the system, Professor Manelli died of heart failure just before noon.

Theodora had been the one deputed to explain gently to Polymnia, early that same morning, that the operation was a more serious one than the cauterizations which she had accepted as an excuse for her father's stay in the clinic. They had both joined Costa there, after the operation; and comforted and reassured by Dr. Othonopoulos and Dr. Paschali, Polymnia had returned home to her baby, where Theodora had given her over to the care of her little daughters, telling them to be sure and insist that their mother should eat a good luncheon. Then she returned for an hour or so to her own house to see Anthi, and it was there that Costa's note with the unexpected news of the sudden end was brought to her.

In the carriage on her way to the Manellis' she sat back in a corner, and thought not of her uncle nor of his children, but of Zoe. Had she heard, she wondered? And hearing, would she not understand at once what had been Costa's motive for not wishing to leave Athens; and understanding — poor Zoe! She promised herself to pass by the Laras' house in the evening before returning home.

She got out at the door of the Manellis' house and rang the bell herself, and as she waited her eyes fell on

the little brass doorplate, and she noticed mechanically that the polishing of many years had almost effaced the letters. Only a portion of the "a" was legible, and the final "li" of the "Manelli." Gerassimos opened the door, bent and limp, with features drawn and swollen almost out of all recognition. He held out both shaking hands to her; *he*, the always irreproachably correct Gerassimos. "Kyria!" he sobbed; "Kyria Theodora! My master — my good master! Why could it not have been me? I was the elder! At his father's house *I* took him to school. Kyria! Kyria!"

Theodora took the old, work-worn hands in hers, and made him sit down on a hall chair. "Courage, Gerassimos! Courage! Of all others you must not break down. Think of his poor children, and all they have to go through! What will they do, if they have not you to see that everything is as it ought to be in this house, even to-day? Will you let them be helped and served by the first comer?"

No appeal could have been so effective as this to the old man, who had spent most of his life in contrasting the service of self-respecting, Corfiote family retainers with the slipshod methods of Athenian servants.

He struggled to his feet. "No! No! You are right, Kyria Theodora; while I live no one shall serve them but their father's old servant!"

"Where are they?"

"Upstairs — in the room —"

She went up, and Costa heard her step, and came out on to the landing to meet her, closing the door of the room behind him. He was pale and heavy-eyed, and as he stooped to kiss her she felt his lips dry and hot on her cheek.

"Will you come and see him, Theodora?"

She rose and followed him into the room.

On the bed, scarcely paler than he had been lately, but

pinched, smooth, waxen, lay what had been her uncle. Theodora stood with Costa's arm round her shoulder, looking at him, and her lip trembled.

A man of very rare tenderness, a loyal kinsman, he lay there before her, his kind eyes hidden forever.

The door opened and Polymnia came in, the tears streaming down her face, and her shoulders heaving.

"Ah, Theodora! Theodora! What is this terrible misfortune which has befallen us? And you, too, were in the secret! You knew he was in danger! Only I, his daughter, was kept in ignorance! Oh, father! my father, why did you leave us?" She threw herself on her knees before the bed and sobbed wildly.

"Don't, Polymnia darling! Don't. You will make yourself ill, and then poor baby will be ill, too. Come downstairs with me, and let us make a list of all you want me to get for you and the girls before to-morrow."

Polymnia let Theodora lead her out of the room, and downstairs.

"And *such* a father as he was!" she cried as she sank into an armchair before the fire. "Such a father! There was never another like him! You do not know! You cannot know as we do! Never a sharp word even when we were children! Everything was for us; he only wanted to see *us* happy around him. Not like some selfish old men, who only think of themselves! *He* would have forgiven me if I had married the grocer round the corner!"

"Polymnia!" cried Costa sternly.

But she only opened her eyes wide, and insisted: "He would, I tell you, he would!" And then fell to sobbing again.

Costa went to the window, and stood there looking at the driving rain.

Theodora followed him laying a hand on his arm. "You must not think I mind, Costa; she is right, you know."

And it was not until some days later that it struck

Costa as being the first time he had heard Theodora tacitly acknowledge her father's selfishness.

Later in the afternoon various relations and intimate friends came to pay their last respects and to condole with the Professor's children. He had been a much-loved man as well as a respected one.

It was past seven in the evening when Theodora left the house to go to see Zoe, promising Costa to return again a little later. She found Zoe crouching before the fire in the library where the lights had not been turned on. Baloo lay beside her and her hands were twisting and untwisting the curly black hair of his mane.

She started up when she saw Theodora and faced her, almost frowning. "You! What is it?"

"Nothing, my child; you have heard, of course?"

"Yes."

"Where is your aunt?"

Zoe pointed to the adjoining room. "She has fallen asleep over the fire. For Heaven's sake, don't wake her! She nearly sent me mad all afternoon."

Theodora let herself fall into an armchair. "My feet are so tired; I have been standing all day."

Then, as a log fell in with a crash sending up bright spurts of flame, she caught sight of a white, pinched-looking face, with wide-open, miserable eyes. She put her hand on the girl's shoulder, but the shoulder was jerked away.

"Don't touch me!"

"Now, Zoe, listen! I came on purpose to tell you —"

"There is nothing to tell me! I know."

"You guess; you cannot know exactly. My poor uncle wanted Costa to stay here so that Polymnia should not be alone in case — this happened, and he did not want Polymnia to know of the danger because she was nursing the baby; he thought of everything! So Costa told no one but me; and with no idea of his reason, of course it was natural that you —"

"No!" cried Zoe fiercely; "it was *not!*"

The door of the adjoining room was thrown back and Aunt Virginia advanced ponderously, turning on the light as she came.

"Why are you in the dark?" she began querulously. Then, catching sight of Theodora, she came forward with outstretched hands: "Is it you? Oh, we were all so grieved! Such an excellent man, your poor uncle! All day we have talked of nothing else. Do tell me how it happened? I do hope he was not conscious at the end! Did they bring the body home at once from the clinic? And poor dear Polymnia? Did she break down very sadly? Or did she faint?"

And so on through a whole string of wearisome, futile questions. At last Theodora, in despair, got up and announced that she must go.

"But listen to the rain!" said Aunt Virginia. "Shall Yanni call a carriage for you?"

"Thank you, no. I am in a hurry and it is not far."

"Have you an umbrella at least?"

"No; but it really does not matter."

"Let me lend you mine?"

Theodora looked at Zoe, who had turned her back to the room and was standing by the closed window. "If you will be so kind, then," she answered. And while Aunt Virginia went to ring the bell for the maid and give the message, she crossed the room and spoke in a whisper hurriedly: "Zoe, listen! Andriotti told me himself, just now, that when Costa went to him to manage the exchange, he thought it very queer; he did not know what to think. So you see you were not the only one. Do you understand? Look at me, Zoe! Do you understand?"

But Zoe would not look at her. "I — I — called him *that!*" she said, staring blindly out into the dark garden; "I deserve — I deserve —" And her whole face worked in agony.

But the umbrella had been brought down, and Theodora was obliged to leave her.

"What is the exact hour of the funeral, my dear child?" Aunt Virginia asked her as she crossed the outer hall.

"Half past ten from the house, and eleven at the Church of St. George, Kyria Lara."

"Oh, we shall come to the house, of course."

At ten the next morning, in the jetted and bugled black dress kept at the back of the wardrobe for such occasions, in the black bonnet temporarily shorn of its mauve plume, black-veiled, black-gloved, and solemn, Aunt Virginia stood at Zoe's door, ready to start.

"My dear Zoe!" she protested; "if you *would* give away the only black dress you had, at least put on your dark-blue dress! Now, do it at once! I will wait for you. I am not going to take you with me in that light brown skirt. It is not decent!"

"You won't have to," returned Zoe shortly; "I can't stand funerals anyway. You can represent the family."

But earlier in the morning, before Theodora had left her house, a beautiful cross of violets had been brought direct from the florist, with a closed envelope addressed to her. Inside it was a scrap of paper in Zoe's handwriting, with no beginning and no signature.

He was always very kind to me. Please put this over him; but don't say that I sent it.

However, Theodora disobeyed the injunction deliberately. She put the cross into Costa's hands. "From Zoe," she said simply.

He did not answer as he took it, did not even look up at her, but Theodora noticed that he kept it by him and when he had arranged the other flowers, he placed the cross of violets on the lid of the closed coffin, beneath the great white cross that had been put there by Polymnia and her girls.

When they returned from the cemetery about noon, Costa drew Andriotti away from the other men who had returned to the house with him, and was urging something.

"But," objected Andriotti, "are you quite sure you won't think better of it? Under the present sad circumstances, I can perfectly well keep you back until next week."

"What should I gain by that? I would far rather leave with my regiment. The reason that kept me here," he added with a sigh, "as I explained to you, exists no longer; our Cousin Marco Delamana is here, if Polymnia requires a man's help in anything; and for the rest, Theodora will be of far more use to her than I should."

Andriotti did not seem convinced. "But the steamer sails at five."

"The sooner the better! I am sick of Athens."

Zoe spent the day alone in her room. She was trying to write a note. Some of her attempts were only of a few lines, some covered a page, some spread over four or five. Some she signed with her whole name, "Zoe A. Lara"; some with her initials only; some simply, "Zoe." But invariably she would read them over frowningly, and tear them into little pieces. Once she stretched her arms high above her head and let them fall again on to the table before her.

"Oh, Baloo! Baloo! I can't put anything into words and I am *so* tired!"

Baloo considered a moment, and then put up a big paw and laid it heavily on her knee. She drew a fresh sheet of paper toward her, and began again.

Toward six in the evening, she rang for Calliope. "Where is my aunt?"

"She has gone out, Kyria Zoe; she said you were to be sure and eat something when you woke up."

"You may bring me some tea; and, Calliope, while you are preparing it, send Yanni up to me!"

When the man knocked at the door Zoe came out on to the landing with a sealed envelope in her hand.

"Listen, Yanni, I want you to take this letter and to give it into Kyrios Costa Manelli's own hands. It is something which it is necessary he should have at once; to-day. So ask Gerassimos to beg him to see you for a moment."

"Shall I wait for the answer, Kyria Zoe?"

"No," she cried hurriedly; "no, there is no answer. Just give the letter into his own hands, and leave at once."

"Very well, Kyria Zoe; be easy; I will give the letter myself."

Then, when the man was halfway down the stairs, she called after him: "Yanni, if Kyrios Manelli should have gone out, — I don't think he will to-day, — but if he should, then give the letter to Gerassimos to deliver to him, himself, as soon as he returns."

"Very well, Kyria Zoe."

"And when you get back, come up and tell me that you have given it."

"I will come at once, Kyria Zoe."

It was a little more than half an hour later when he knocked at the door again. When Zoe opened it, the sealed envelope was still in the man's hand.

"Kyrios Costa Manelli has gone."

"But I told you —"

"No; he has not gone out; he has gone away. Gerassimos told me that he left in a hurry: that he packed his knapsack for him, himself, and that an officer called for him in a motor car and they were going straight down to Piræus. The steamer was to sail at five from there, and Gerassimos says —"

But he did not have time to finish his sentence. Zoe snatched the letter out of his hand, went back into her room, and locked the door.

CHAPTER XXXIII

The women of Athens who had attended the ambulance classes, and they were a great many of all ages, had been called to work almost at once. Notwithstanding the victories, or rather because of them, the wounded came pouring in daily; all the hospitals were full to overflowing, and most of the schools and public buildings had been pressed into service.

Theodora was fortunate enough to be working in the Aretaion Hospital, high up on the Kiphissia Road, so that she was close enough to her house to be able, unless there were an extraordinary pressure of work, to return home at noon for an hour or so.

In the mornings, being so close to the hospital, she was there before any of the other ladies, and very often at half past-seven she had already changed her hat and coat for the white cap and long nursing apron, and was making the round of her ward.

She had been an apt pupil at the surgery classes. Dr. Othonopoulos used to say of her that she always gave him the impression, not of learning, but of remembering things she knew already. She had a light, firm touch and concentrated all her attention on the work of the moment, so that she was already entrusted with the dressing of the less serious wounds.

Zoe had also followed the classes from the first, and spent almost as many hours at the hospital as Theodora, although of necessity it was the lighter work that fell to her share. But she had easily established herself first favorite in all the wards, as well as the one to which she belonged. When she arrived in the morning laden with flowers, with ciga-

rettes, with newspapers, with sweets, a wave of excitement spread from bed to bed.

It was not what she brought them — very few of the ladies arrived empty-handed, and whatever else may be laid to their charge, the Greek peasants and men of the people are not acquisitive — it was just herself, the way she talked to them, the way she remembered all they said to her, the way she laughed with them, and at them, even the way she scolded them. They had christened her "the little lady," and there was always a lighting-up of faces, a turning of heads to follow her, as she limped through the long wards.

But they, the poor, wounded lads, were the only ones who heard her laugh those days. To all others, even to Theodora, she was silent, curt, even repellent. She worked ceaselessly, hungrily, greedily; there seemed nothing she dreaded so much as an empty hour. It was useless attempting to spare her: she never consented to spare herself. On days when fresh relays of wounded were brought in, she was always among the first to meet them. Sitting on a low stool when she could, kneeling when she could not, and sitting on the floor when she could do neither, she would wash, clean, scrub, disinfect, and cut away soiled bandages, so quickly and deftly that even when the men had been brought direct from the front, with no stoppage at any intermediate hospital, her patients were always of the first to be ready for the doctor's inspection. She had fought down her dread of the operating-room, and was always ready when any of the lads wanted "the little lady" to come with him there and hold his hand.

One day after boiling instruments for part of the morning, and in the intervals keeping the patients in her ward in roars of laughter by drawing caricatures for them, she attended three operations, and after the last, which was the amputation of a leg, undertook to tell the poor

lad's mother, who was waiting outside, what had happened to her son; and very gently and tenderly she did it. But when the young assistant doctor exclaimed, "You are one of the bravest women I ever knew!" she turned sharply on the unfortunate young man and answered almost roughly, "This is neither the time nor the place to be a coward!"

That same afternoon Theodora found her sitting outside one of the wards, her fingers pressed tightly over her closed eyelids. She hesitated for a moment, and then touching her shoulder, remarked casually: "What are you doing there, Zoe? I have such a bad headache I can scarcely see you."

Zoe lifted eyes with heavy black shadows under them. "Have you? Mine aches a little too."

Theodore looked at the big window where the rain was beating against the panes, and out into the garden where the wind made the tall palms bend and creak. "At what time did you order the carriage?"

"Seven, as usual."

"And it is not yet four! Listen, Zoe! There is not much to do this evening. Number 12 is under morphine, and Katharine Larcher is sitting with number 19. Supposing we were to telephone to Stathi to bring the carriage at once, and that you took me to your house with you. It would be such a charity. If I were to go home, Anthi, poor child, gets so exuberant after not seeing me all day it would give the finishing touch to my headache."

"Very well," said Zoe listlessly; "I don't mind."

And Theodora went off to telephone.

Half an hour later, as they were driving past the Evangelismos Hospital, they saw at a distance two figures in deep mourning, holding their umbrellas very low, and struggling against the driving rain.

On nearer approach they proved to be Polymnia and

her eldest daughter Despina. Zoe at once let down the window and called to the coachman to stop.

"Come in!" she cried to them; "come in at once! And after you drop us at home, Stathi shall drive you to your house."

"That *is* kind of you!" said Polymnia as she got in; "no, no, don't move! I shall sit on this side with Despina so as not to wet you. Three tram-cars passed us quite full, and there was not even an open, one-horse carriage anywhere to be seen! We have just come from the Evangelismos, and Despina has been reading aloud so long to some of the men it has made her head ache."

"It seems a headachy day," commented Theodora; "we are going home with one apiece."

"I think," said Polymnia, "that the general atmosphere of ether has a good deal to do with it."

"Auntie Theodora," laughed Despina, "one of the men — a peasant from Menedi — told us to-day that his 'honorable wound' was paining him! And when we asked him why he called it that, he told us that the Queen called the soldiers' wounds 'honorable wounds' when she came to visit the Evangelismos yesterday, and if *she* did not know good Greek, who did?"

"Talking of wounds," said Polymnia; "I had a letter from Costa yesterday and he tells me he got a scratch in that skirmish the other day, on the forearm from the point of a bayonet; but really a scratch. It was scarcely worth dressing, he says, and even *I* should not worry about it if I saw it. And fancy, Theodora, he complains, poor fellow, that he has received no letters whatever since he left! He begs for news, and yet we have written constantly, the girls and I. I suppose it cannot be helped, but really the postal arrangements are terrible."

Theodora, sitting close to Zoe in the narrow brougham, had felt her shiver all over when Polymnia began speaking.

Now the girl turned to her and asked in a stiff, color-

less voice: "Did you say your brother had received no letters at all?"

"Not a single one."

"I ask because — as I did not see him before he left — there was — something I wished to explain, and I sent him a note two days afterwards to Chios."

Polymnia looked at her rather curiously. "I suppose it has shared the fate of all ours. He says distinctly he has not had a word from a soul in Athens. Can I give him any message when I write?"

The carriage had stopped at the Laras' house.

"No, thank you," said Zoe as she got out; "it does not matter; there is no message."

It was warm and still in the library after the wind and rain outside and they had tea brought in there.

Theodora sat down in one of the big armchairs, frowning. "Zoe, sometimes it hurts to come back to warmth and peace after a hard day's work, when one thinks —"

"Don't!" said Zoe roughly.

There was silence for a few minutes, and then she pushed a cup across the table to Theodora.

"Drink it! I have made it strong, and it will do your head good."

Zoe drank a cup herself, then ate half a piece of toast, and dropped the other half to Baloo, who snapped it in the air and crunched it, without rising from his place at her feet. But in a moment she dragged her skirt away from his heavy black body and began to limp aimlessly up and down the room.

From a side table she picked up an evening newspaper which the servant had placed there when he had brought the tray in. Theodora watched her as she stood under the light stretching her arms out to hold the paper wide open, and looking for the latest "From the Front" news.

Suddenly she threw the newspaper from her on to the

floor, and turning to the fireplace crossed her arms on the shelf and looked down into the blaze.

Theodora started from her seat. "Zoe! What is the matter?"

"Nothing! Oh, nothing! No one you know. Only that officer in the picture there. It's — it's horrid!"

Theodora stooped and picked up the "Hestia." On the front page, under the usual heading, "The fallen of the War," were two portraits.

One was of a colonel of artillery, gray-haired, stout, with a smile on his broad face. One imagined the man making rather obvious jokes, fond of a good dinner, perhaps, and certainly popular with his brother officers. The other was of a young sublieutenant, Siderakis by name, standing with both hands on the hilt of his sword. It was a very boyish face, with thick, dark hair, and a small mustache which left the lips free. The eyes were of the half-closed, velvety kind, and the forehead broad and well shaped.

Theodora brought it close to the fireplace. "Is it a friend of Nasso's?"

"No," gulped Zoe; "I never spoke to the man in my life! I did not even know that his name was Siderakis, nor that he had become an officer. But we used to see him, Nasso and I, in the Zappion and Royal Gardens, in sailor clothes. I remember — his bare neck in a blue sailor collar, and his brown legs with short socks. They were always so well pulled up, and we used to call him 'the tidy boy.' And now — oh, it's horrid!" And she choked again.

Theodora folded back the newspaper and looked at the portrait once more. "Poor boy!" She went back to the tea table and sat down. "What a stupendous difference it makes!" she said, "when one comes from the general to the particular. When we hear of a victory, we rejoice, and ring bells, and cry, 'How splendid!' and only look

grave for a few moments when we are told it has cost the lives of some hundreds of men. It means so little in hundreds! They have died for Greece, we say, and it is a glorious death! But as soon as out of the vague hundreds we hear of some one man in particular who was called Yanni, or Costa, or Nico, or we find out to whom he belonged, or even more, when we see his picture, and imagine those living eyes closed and sunken or that smooth forehead with a bullet hole through it — then we understand — better."

"Yes," said Zoe; "but after you have understood once I think you never forget again."

She took the newspaper from Theodora's hands and folded it across. "Have you had another letter from Metro?" she asked.

"I had one yesterday; just three or four lines on a scrap of packing-paper. He is perfectly well, he says, and not near the firing-line for the present."

"How often he writes!"

"Yes; and the hard part is that he, like Costa, gets no letters from here. They are constantly on the move, and he says the post cannot follow them. He has only received one from Monsieur Arnoux since he left; not a single one of mine. But he goes on writing and sending the letters at every possible opportunity. Sometimes I can see by the shaky handwriting that he is so tired that his fingers can scarcely hold the pen."

Theodora's voice was a trifle unsteady.

Zoe looked at her; then she said in a softer voice: "Does it seem long, Theodora?"

"Ah, Zoe, you don't know! It is endless! We must none of us break down now. Thank Heaven for all the work there is to be done! But sometimes the longing, the hunger for a voice, that nothing appeases, is terrible! And then the habit of thinking, 'I must tell him this, or show him that,' against which one is constantly stopped

short as though one ran with outstretched arms against a hard wall. It hurts, Zoe, it hurts like a real pain!"

And all Zoe found to answer was: "I'm very glad to hear it!"

For a moment Theodora looked at her with widening, uncomprehending eyes; then she flushed all over her face. "You mean — you thought — you did n't think that I — ?"

"Exactly. I did n't think that you — But I'm glad, gladder than I can tell you, that you do."

There was silence in the room; only Baloo moved uneasily in his sleep before the fire and gave a little far-away bark. Zoe leaned back in her chair, and stirred him with the point of her shoe.

"Do you sleep well at night, Theodora?"

"Yes. I am a very normal sort of person, you know; I nearly always sleep well."

Zoe kept her eyes fixed on the spirals of smoke rising over the half-charred logs and she seemed to be waiting, frowning and expectant, until the sudden falling together of the wood started the flames once more. Then she said suddenly: "I wish I did! Of course I know that I cannot work as hard as you can, but I do as much as this wretched leg will let me, and yet I can't sleep properly when I get to bed. I remain there hour after hour, conscious in a sort of way of the time and the room, yet not really awake, but lying there with shapes that crowd round me and grow taller and taller, and smaller and smaller, and come nearer and nearer, and mop and mow at me, and have forms but no consistence." She shook her head angrily. "They drive me mad."

Theodora looked at the girl's face as she spoke, and she thought she had never seen it look so small and so pinched. "Zoe," she said gently, "*can't* you speak?"

Zoe looked up angrily. "I *am* speaking."

"I mean of your trouble."

For a few moments Zoe seemed to watch the sparks which singly or in companies flew up the chimney. "My trouble," she said, still looking into the fire, "is, I suppose, like every one's trouble just now. Some have more, others less — we have Nasso, you know, who is much more than a cousin —"

Theodora bent across Baloo, who lay between their two chairs, and laid her hand on Zoe's. "Yes, I know. But I know also that there is some one else about whom you are thinking much more than about Nasso."

Zoe dragged her hand away and flung the paper she was still holding to a distant table. "You are imaginative!"

"No; only observant. You have been secretly miserable for days, besides the open trouble which we all share. Why, you shivered all over in the carriage just now when Polymnia spoke of his trifling wound."

Zoe bent her head over the tea table, mechanically pulling a corner of the cover straight. "Why — I — I — was brutal to him before he left; you heard it yourself."

"Brutal or not, you have been thinking of him, before all others, morning, noon, and night. Now tell me that is a lie if you can!"

Zoe got up abruptly and went over to the window, turning her back to the room. The shutters toward the garden had not been closed, and she stood there looking at the driving sheets of water striking against the window panes and pouring down their length in miniature cataracts.

There was silence for a long time. Theodora began to fear that she had offended the girl deeply. She reached for her jacket which she had hung over the back of a chair and put it on slowly; then she pulled down her veil and drew on her gloves. The silence remained unbroken.

"I am going, Zoe," she said at last; "I shall see you tomorrow morning."

But just as she opened the door of the room, Zoe turned round abruptly.

"It is true!" she said.

Before Theodora could answer, she heard the outer bell ring hurriedly and repeatedly.

"Zoe! Wait here for me!" she said. And she never knew exactly afterwards what made her say it. "I shall come back to you in a moment; I think some one wants to see me."

She stepped out, closing the library door after her, and Zoe, who imagined that she had caught sight of some messenger in the hall, waited.

The hall was empty; but voices sounded behind the glass door leading on to the colonnade.

Another moment, and Aunt Virginia appeared shaking and sobbing, leaning heavily on Andriotti's arm, with Monsieur Arnoux close behind. They were followed by Andrea Lara, who stopped short as he caught sight of Theodora and came quickly toward her.

He looked gray and haggard, and his lips twitched.

"Ah, you are here! That is better so."

Theodora stumbled forward. "Metro — ?"

"No!" he cried with a gasp; "no, it is our grief. Where is Zoe?"

"She is in there. What has happened?"

He tried to answer, but no voice came.

Monsieur Arnoux hastened forward and laid a thin, old hand on Theodora's arm.

"My child," he said, "Nasso" — and his voice broke on the name — "has found what he always said he wished for, above all things — the crown of a perfect death!"

The library door was opened from within, and Zoe came out looking from one to another in bewilderment.

"What is it?" she asked.

Aunt Virginia, trembling violently, suddenly threw her

arms round her. But her words were meaningless and incoherent. "Zoe! Zoe! Oh! Oh! Why! What have we done that s-s-such a terrible calamity — Why did we let him go — ? Oh! Oh! Oh!"

Zoe strove to detach herself from the encircling arms, but they only clung the tighter, and she looked about her with the eyes of an animal caught in a trap. At last she struggled free and ran toward her father.

"Father! Theodora!" she cried, her eyes dilating wildly; "tell me quickly! What is it?"

Her father could only hide his face in his hands, and for a moment Theodora looked at her uncertainly.

"He has been killed!" she blurted out at last. Then seeing the growing horror in Zoe's eyes, she added the name very quickly: "Nasso has been killed!"

CHAPTER XXXIV

The dreary days passed and there were very few details. All that was to be ascertained, for the present, was that Lieutenant Lara had been killed outright and buried where he fell, and that this had happened during the defense of a narrow pass in the island of Chios, which he and his men had been sent forward to hold at all hazards.

Aunt Virginia — who considered it her duty to receive all visitors who came to condole with the family, "For in my young days," she said, "we were taught to control our private grief when it interfered with our social duties" — was especially indignant on this point, and enlarged on it to all comers.

Why should the poor boy have been sent to defend some place inland? She was sure it was somebody's blunder! A naval officer's place, she had always heard, was on board his ship! If they wanted this pass, or whatever it was, defended, they should have sent an army officer! She was positive it was some one else's business who had shirked it, and had taken advantage of poor, dear Nasso's usual kindness!

As a rule she kept her lamentations and her comments for visitors, but now and then, during the first days, she would continue after they had left, talking of endless possibilities. If only this had been done, and if only he had been on his ship, and how easily he might have been saved, and how terrible it was to think that only one little half hour would have made all the difference; and so on, interminably.

Zoe's endurance, never very great, soon reached its limit. But she spoke more gently than she usually did

to her aunt. "Hush, Aunt Virginia! Don't talk any more about the things that might have been. We have got to live with things as they are now!"

Aunt Virginia shook her head mournfully, and was silent for a little while, but the continuous stream of futile conjecture soon began its maddening course again. Also, there was no refuge anywhere, for Dr. Paschali had found Zoe in a distinctly anæmic condition, and had strictly forbidden hospital work for some time to come.

Theodora soon came to the conclusion that some diversion must be found to save Zoe from a nervous breakdown. If she had simply offered to come and stay with the Laras for a few days, Zoe would probably have answered, "Don't trouble! What's the use?"

So she offered nothing, but she discovered that Anthi's room and her own were in need of immediate painting, and she begged for house-room for the child and herself for a few days while this was being done. "Clever Theodora!" as Miss Burney murmured when she heard of the ruse.

And as far as possible it was a successful one. Anthi, strange to say, attached herself from the first to Aunt Virginia. Her reasons originally may not have been wholly unassociated with the discovery that boxes of Swiss chocolates might be kept in wardrobes as well as dresses, but certainly she ran after Aunt Virginia all over the house, and the old lady, flattered by the preference, made much of the child, and spent a good deal of her time telling her stories or cutting paper dolls for her, to the great relief of the rest of the household. Theodora went to the hospital for two or three hours every morning, chiefly to have something in which to interest Zoe on her return.

But all subjects somehow drifted back to Nasso, and it was a long time before they spoke of much else. Somehow it was in sunny weather that Zoe seemed to suffer most, and in the worst of Athenian winters there are al-

ways plenty of days on which grief seems unreal and impossible.

Miss Burney often came and sat with them in the afternoons; a poor, sad-eyed Miss Burney, suddenly aged; for Nasso was the one she had loved most of all.

It was she, one afternoon of the first days of December, when the bells were again ringing joyously, who brought them the extra editions with the news of the successful naval engagement off the European shore of the Dardanelles, and of the flight in confusion of the Turkish fleet! She brought the news half fearfully; was it not Nasso's old ship that had distinguished itself above all the others?

Andrea Lara, who was sitting beside the fire, sprang up and took the papers from her hands, eagerly reading the details half aloud and half to himself. Zoe had turned her back to the room and was leaning over the fireplace.

Theodora looked at her for a moment, and then burst out: "Zoe, say something to us: I can't bear to see you, when I know how proud and glad you would have been of such news a little while ago!"

Zoe turned round and faced them; her eyes were dry and fever-bright, and she was rather flushed. "I *am* glad! I *am* proud! How can you dream I should not be? But it is just the gladness that hurts so badly, because he who would have been gladder still, he who would have been mad with joy, and oh, so proud of the glory and triumph of his own ship, is not alive to feel it! And I keep thinking that in a few months or weeks all his shipmates will be coming home, and from the joy of the return one will be missing! The one who would have been the happiest and the merriest and the proudest of them all!"

"Zoe, my child! Zoe!" Her father put his arm round her and patted her shoulder continuously. "Don't, Zoe! Don't cry!"

But it was he who was crying.

Just then the door opened and Polymnia and her girls came in, followed by Aunt Virginia, who had seen them passing from her window and had called them in. They, of course, had also heard the news, and Polymnia looked slightly embarrassed, but Hypatia, her second girl, a bright, fair-haired child of twelve, who did not know what shyness meant, rushed up to Zoe and threw her arms round her.

"Oh, Zoe, is n't it just glorious! We met General Kardanis and he has received a private telegram from his nephew, who is on the Averoff, you know, and he says the sailors were so brave, they kept shouting for joy all the time, and it might have been a feast and not a battle! And oh, Zoe dear, of course I know that angels don't fight, and that they are just being happy all the time, but *don't* you think Nasso will be a little bit happier today than all the other angels?"

Zoe smiled very tenderly as she bent to kiss the child. "Yes, darling, I am sure he will."

Polymnia looked horrified, and tried to apologize for her. "Now, Hypatia! Sit down and keep quiet if you can! One never knows," she added, turning to the others, "what she will say next. Really, she is an impossible child!"

But Hypatia was irrepressible. "I'm not!" she protested; "I suppose I say silly things, but I 'm not impossible. I know, because mamma always says it, and I looked in the dictionary, and impossible means something that can't ever be; and I can be, and I am!"

They all laughed, and Theodora pulled her down on the sofa beside her. "Yes, my dear, you very much 'are'!"

"Auntie Theodora," — as she snuggled down and threw her arms round her waist, — "I had a letter from Uncle Costa last night. Despina and I had both written to him, and he says ours were the very first letters he received, and he answered mine first, because it was the first he opened, and next time he will write to Despina."

Theodora looked inquiringly at Polymnia, but the latter shook her head. "No; he knew nothing when he wrote. Hypatia's letter was enclosed in one for me; it is written from quite another part of the island."

"It was so badly written," put in Despina, "that we could scarcely make the words out."

"Because," added Hypatia, in a hurry to be the one to give the news — "because he wrote it all with his left hand."

"Why?"

The question came from Zoe, and it was as short and as sharp as the crack of a pistol.

Polymnia explained: "Oh, you know the bayonet scratch I told you about on his arm; it was such a trifle and all the doctors were so busy with serious wounds that he rather neglected it, and it seems it got rather sore, and he says that the doctor, who is fussy, insisted on binding it up and making him carry it in a sling. But it will be all right in a few days, Costa writes."

A week later Theodora and Anthi returned to their own house. Triantafyllia greeted them with joy, and stood modestly by to receive well-earned praises on the exquisite cleanliness of everything. She had even contributed a bunch of many-colored chrysanthemums, all of whose stalks she had clipped to exactly the same length, and stuffed tightly into a Chinese vase, generally left empty.

"Only wait until the master is to come back, Kyria, and then we will turn the rooms into a garden! Ah," she added, sighing, "how the house asks for him!"

The next few weeks passed very quietly. Theodora settled into a life of regular routine and fixed hours. She went to the hospital in the mornings, but there was less work to be done there just now. The greater part of the army in Epirus was still outside Bizani, and most of the

wounded from there were naturally taken to the hospital at Philippias. In the afternoons she often took Anthi out with her, and, after bringing her home, nearly always ended the day at the Laras', or sometimes, though more rarely, at Polymnia's.

New Year's Day was, of course, the quietest of festivals that year. Even Anthi spent most of it at the hospital with her cousins, helping to distribute various little gifts to "mamma's poor sodjers," which, as she carefully explained to each one, she had helped to tie up in "pwetty parcels"; and from all sides of the wards came a chorus of thanks and blessings, and good wishes: "God make your years many!" "Health to your little hands!" "May your good mother live to you!" And oftenest of all, "May the good hour bring your father back to you!" Anthi listened to all with the greatest attention and solemnity.

When they left the hospital she was walking on in front between Despina and Hypatia. Suddenly she dropped their hands and ran back to her mother, the little pink face under the white fur cap glowing with the excitement of an idea which had just come to her.

"Mamma, when baba comes home, even if it is n't at a 'good hour,' like the poor men said, won't you let me sit up for him, even if it is a vewy late hour?"

The little girls hugged her. "Auntie Theodora, is n't she sweet?"

But Anthi insisted: "Wont you please, mamma? Please say you pwomise!" And her mother promised faithfully, even if it should be, as Anthi said, "In the vewy middel of the night!"

All through the month of January Theodora received regular news from Metro; a few lines written at all moments on all sorts and descriptions of paper; once it had even been on the margin of a scrap of torn newspaper.

He repeatedly enjoined her not to be anxious. The fire

of the Turks from Bizani was, he told her, most erratic, and the casualties just where his regiment was stationed were few and far between.

Sometimes, long after the war was over, she came to wonder whether, by the very force of his determination that she should not suffer, he had succeeded from a distance in willing her to believe all he wished. The fact remained that all through that month and until the first week in February she somehow felt more content than she had done ever since Metro left.

Then came a week without a word. On the seventh day she went to Andriotti. "I know how pestered you must be with all sorts of requests, but it will be eight days to-morrow that I have had no letter, and —"

Andriotti laughed a little. "My dear lady, Metro has spoiled you badly! That is the worst of writing regularly; however, this time the explanation is easy. You know there was a motor accident two weeks ago?"

"Yes, of course I heard about it?"

"Well, there were four post-bags among the things that were swept away into the river, and they were precisely from Bizani."

"Oh!" — a long-drawn-out "oh" of disappointment; "and Metro's letters will have been in them."

"It is more than probable; but, at any rate, you are easy now?"

"Thank you, yes, quite easy."

"There was another post last night; I should not wonder if you found a letter waiting for you at home." And he smiled again to himself at the rapidity with which she took leave of him after hearing this. He accompanied her to the end of the long passage. "Remember that I am always at your service and never hesitate to come to me!"

She smiled back at him. "Is not that a rather dangerous permission to give in these busy days?"

"I know where to give it, you see."

When he returned to his private office he sat still for a few seconds with a puzzled look on his face. "Those well-born women," he muttered; "how deceptive they are! Somehow, from her manner to him when I have seen them together, I had not imagined —"

Then he shook his head resolutely and pulled a big batch of envelopes toward him. It was not the moment for psychological problems, however enticing.

Out of doors there was a warm, pleasant, winter sun; the sky was of a glorious Athenian blue, and as Theodora walked rapidly under the pepper trees of the Kiphissia Road, their long, drooping branches made a soft, swishing sound against the silk of her open sunshade which reminded her of tiny waves breaking on the seashore.

When she reached the little Square where the carriages stand, she paused for a moment to look at the deep purple of the hollows on Mount Hymettus. As she lowered her eyes again to the road she noticed the figure of a small, old woman in mourning walking slowly some way ahead of her. Suddenly, with a little shock, she recognized Miss Burney. It was the first time that it had struck her that a stranger, seeing the little governess for the first time, would call her an old woman. She hastened her steps and overtook her.

"Miss Burney! How nice to meet you! Were you going to my house?"

Miss Burney turned tired, red-rimmed eyes toward her. "Yes, my dear, yes. I was coming to see you and the little one. I have been staying at home too much, and it makes one selfish and rusty and useless. Do you know, that was one of the last things our dear boy said to me. I had given the excuse of feeling too old for something or other and he said: 'Now, where's your principles? Don't you go and get rusty while I'm away, Miss Burney, darlint.' And I promised him; so now,

you see, I may wear out, but I must never rust!" And her eyes filled with tears as she spoke.

Theodora passed her arm through hers. "We won't let you, any of us!" Then, after a moment she added: "Does n't it strike you sometimes how many women in your place might have lived here as long as you have, and have had as many pupils, and yet never a friend among them? Of course you would probably be suffering less now; but you would n't change, would you?"

"And be a lonely, miserable, stunted old creature? Not I! The price I am paying now is none too high for all the joy I've had, and there 's nothing but has its price. There's an old Irish proverb: 'What will you have?' quoth God; 'pay for it, and take it!'"

As soon as they entered the hall Theodora saw the evening newspaper lying on the table, and next to it a letter in a gray envelope. She seized hold of it and tore open the envelope.

"Miss Burney, I'm sure you would find me quite unnatural if I were to be polite, and ask permission to read it, would n't you? Come into my room and sit down while I read it."

"He's quite well," she said, in a few moments; "and he had heard of the motor accident and guessed one or two of his letters must have got lost then, and so he repeats what he wrote in them. Is n't that just like him? He says that one cannot imagine the difference in the spirit of the troops, ever since the Crown Prince arrived there, and how much better fed they are. Just fancy, Miss Burney, they get tea every morning with a little rum in it! Metro writes that most of the men made wry faces at first and called it medicine; but now they like it; it warms them up for the day."

Her eye traveled over the three or four closely written bits of paper. Then she said: "Listen to what he writes here, Miss Burney! I won't translate: —

It is some days, now, that we are gathered on the heights round Yannina, and the last orders are that we keep our places without attacking. We spend nearly all day in the trenches exchanging shots with the Turks. However, the chances of being hit in our present position are reduced to a minimum. From the beginning of the siege, until to-day, my company has only seven wounded and no killed. We all hope for a speedy end to the siege because since yesterday, notwithstanding the tremendous difficulties of the ground, the artillery has managed to drag forty of the large cannons up here. I am splendidly well, and though it is colder since yesterday and there is snow on the hills around, I scarcely feel the difference. I don't know whether you will be able to read this bit, as I am writing on my knee with a pointless pencil by the light of the camp-fire, which warms beautifully, but is no good as a lamp. Do you know that I have learned how to cook! It was my turn yesterday, and all the men found my soup excellent. Our tents, when we can get to them, are pitched in an olive grove on the other side of the hill, and there is a little stream quite close to us. So you see we are not faring badly at all.

"There, Miss Burney! That was worth hurrying home for, was it not?"

"Surely it was, my dear. And what will the date of it be?"

Theodora turned to the first page. "Only eleven days old! I have had much older ones than that. I am glad Monsieur Arnoux said he would drop in at tea-time. He will be *so* happy to find news. Come, let us go into the sitting room."

There was a fire there, and Theodora stood before it, holding the evening paper which she had picked up as they passed through the hall.

She read the latest telegrams, and then turned to another page. "Now, if this were a scene in a drama, Miss Burney, while the heroine was carelessly glancing over all this long list of killed and wounded, she would suddenly come across the name of her beloved, emit a

wild shriek, and sink gracefully on to the floor in a dead faint. In prosaic reality it never happens like that. Other people hear such things by telegram and come and tell you. 'Punch' had a series of pictures once, 'Where real life might take hints from the stage' — do you remember?"

Miss Burney shook her head and frowned. "Don't, Theodora, dear! Don't talk so, in times like these!"

Theodora smiled at her. "All right, Miss Burney, I won't. Sometimes feeling very happy makes me say silly things, and somehow to-day — "

She did not finish her sentence, and after a moment Miss Burney looked up at her carelessly.

Then she started to her feet.

Theodora was standing still, with widely dilating eyes, the newspaper clutched tightly in one hand, and the other resting on a line halfway down the page. Then her hand shook as though it had been struck, and the newspaper fell from the open fingers.

Miss Burney sprang forward and seized it.

The unexpected, the unlikely, the crudely dramatic thing, had happened. There, in the long line of casualties of six days ago, among the petty officers wounded in the great attack on Bizani was the name of Demetrius Philippides, of Athens, third on the list.

"Theodora! Theodora! Don't look like that! It is n't true! It is n't true, I tell you! And if it is, it will be only a scratch; and we will go and bring him back, you and I! Theodora, speak to me!" And she grasped her wildly by the arm.

Theodora's lips opened slowly, and after a second, two words issued from them: "Not — killed?"

"Good God, no! It says wounded, and I expect even that's a mistake; but it says wounded. See! Look at it just there! Look, my child! You must look for yourself!"

Theodora groped and felt for the paper that was held

out to her, and her hands were like those of a blind woman. "Yes — I see."

Miss Burney turned to the bell and kept her finger on the push continuously. "I am going to send for a carriage; put your hat on again, and we will go together to Andriotti. He will find out for you."

Theodora turned her head, but her eyes did not fix anything. "He will not know. I — I — was — just — there."

"Well, but he can find out. He will go, or take us to the other Ministers, to the Prime Minister if need be, and they will telegraph at once. Triantafyllia!" she continued to the bewildered girl who came running in, "fly and bring a carriage, single, double, whatever you can find. And let Aglaia stand at the door, in case one passes while you are away. Run as quick as ever you can! It is important."

And while the girl ran down the stairs, Miss Burney disappeared behind the blue linen curtain, and in a moment was back again with a hat and jacket in her hands.

Theodora shook her head. "You go!"

"And leave you here alone, to imagine all sorts of horrors! Sure and I will not."

"You will learn things quicker without me. Go! Please go! I shall wait here for you. I can't come."

Miss Burney looked at her and hesitated a second; then she pushed her back into an armchair, threw the jacket over her knees and hurried out of the room. A moment later Theodora heard her quick, pattering steps running down the stairs.

After the sound of the carriage wheels had died away there came a gradual numbing of sensation which was not unpleasant. It reminded her vaguely of the first effects of morphine when she had been ill. The little clock on her writing table struck five.

Was it only five o'clock?

Theodora looked down on her knees at the jacket which Miss Burney had thrown over them. She noticed the big, navy-blue buttons, standing out.

How smooth they were!

For some time she sat there wondering whether they were made of celluloid or of horn. At last she put out her finger to touch the one nearest to her, but she miscalculated the distance and her hand fell limply into her lap. Then she wondered why her fingers felt swollen and numb.

Ah, that was the morphine, of course.

The clock struck the quarter, and Theodora started and looked round the familiar room with a frowning glance of surprise. If they had given her morphine, why was she not in bed?

Suddenly the sound of a voice reëchoed through her brain: "Lie still, my child! Make your mind a blank! Try to rest!"

With a cry she threw off the covering jacket and staggered across the room to the window, stumbling against the chairs in her way. It seemed as though the floor had ceased to support her feet. She threw open the window and looked down into the street. Then she drew back hastily.

Just at that moment a carriage had stopped before the door of the house, and she had caught sight of Zoe and Miss Burney, and with them Monsieur Arnoux with Andriotti!

What were they all doing together? She listened. There was no ring, but in a moment there were many steps on the stairs, and she could distinguish Zoe's halting one among the others.

The glass door clanged and the steps came across the hall.

Theodora did not move; she stood looking fearfully with distended eyes at the half-open door.

Andriotti came in first, and walked straight up to her. Over his shoulder she caught sight of Miss Burney, who had dropped on to a chair beside the door.

"Kyria Philippides — my dear friend — I saw the newspaper as soon as you left me, and I telegraphed at once to headquarters." He paused, but no question came. "There was no delay, the — the confirm — I mean the answer came at once."

Theodora kept her eyes fixed on his, in continued silence.

Andriotti came a step nearer and took her limp hand in both of his. "Unfortunately there — is no mistake. Sergeant Philippides they telegraph was in the attack of last Monday before Bizani and was — was seriously wounded; in fact — very seriously wounded."

Theodora's lips moved two or three times before any sound came through them.

"Very seriously wounded," she repeated slowly in a curious, colorless voice. Then she turned a ghastly face on Andriotti: "Does that mean *more* than wounded?"

He bent his head slowly.

Monsieur Arnoux staggered across the room and tried to take her in his arms; but she disengaged herself abruptly and stood looking at the ashen face and the trembling hands of the old man almost with wonder.

The unbelievable horror knocked at the entrance to her brain, knocked, and knocked, and was refused admittance.

She had often thought of terrible things; of imprisonment in a Turkish prison, of torture even, but, strangely enough, never of this; never of death, of nothingness, of no return!

She was conscious of fingers plucking at her sleeve, then the sudden cessation made her turn round. Monsieur Arnoux had sunk, half sitting, half leaning, on to the table beside them, his head hidden in the hollow of his

arm, his bent old shoulders heaving, and broken words of "Mon fils" and "Mon petit enfant!" were ended by the dry, rasping sobs of old age.

A slow shudder shook Theodora from head to foot.

It was true, then!

With a curious, almost impersonal solicitude she helped the others to put the old man into an armchair. Then she turned to Andriotti. "Will you be so kind as to drive to his house with him, and if you would not mind passing by the French School, I am sure Monsieur Tarnier or Monsieur Chabert will go and sit with him. He is very old, you know, and it would not be good for him to be alone." Then, with a face which was perfectly devoid of emotion, except for the eyes, which had remained distended and which looked at no one, she begged Miss Burney to go to Polymnia and to her other cousins.

"They must be told. I shall be all right. Zoe will stay with me."

When the others had driven off, she remained on the edge of the sofa where she had sat down, her arms hanging loosely on either side of her body.

She looked at Zoe. "Go and tell the servants! But don't let me hear them, and don't let any one come near me! If they must cry and howl, let them shut the kitchen door."

"I won't let them," Zoe answered in a low voice.

"And tell them if they dare to let the child understand anything, they will be sent away at once."

"Miss Burney took her with her to Polymnia's."

"Very well; but tell them for when she returns."

"I will tell them. And shall I come back to you?"

"If you like."

When Zoe returned, Theodora had not changed her position. "Zoe," she said dully as the young girl limped up to her rather timidly, "is it true?"

And then in a moment Zoe was clinging about her and

kissing her. Instinctively she fell into the speech of the people: "Oh, my little heart! My golden love! My Theodora! Oh, I can never tell you! You don't know how — "

Theodora shivered once or twice.

"Yes, I know. I know you are sorry for me. But it is you who do not know! You do not know that I have lost the man whom I never knew how to love! He loved me, as only men of his kind can love, and I — I left his heart empty! Do you hear?" she repeated fiercely — "empty! And the horrid thing is that he knew; he *knew*, I tell you, that I was always thinking of some one before him! Of my father! Of that old man eaten up with pride, who never loved enough to have learned how to forgive; who — who was not worthy to tie the shoes of the man whom he despised! And now — ! Think of it! Think of it! He knew his great love was never sufficient for me! He *knew* it!"

And the face she lifted was ghastly. "Zoe, I shall think of that until I die — and the Doukas live long — " And then her voice broke out in one bitter cry: "Oh, my man! Oh, my own man!"

CHAPTER XXXV

In after years Theodora could never recall anything very clearly of the next few days. It was a confused, dreamlike impression of familiar rooms which looked changed; of familiar faces with strange expressions; of friends and acquaintances who wore a sober look and lowered their voices when they spoke to her, but who, for some extraordinary reason, it seemed to her, were otherwise as usual; talked, laughed, discussed news with unfeigned interest, and were occupied with their own affairs.

There were hours when the war and all that followed were entirely wiped away from her mind, and she went back to the quiet days before.

Metro was out, she thought, and she listened for the sound of his key in the lock of the street door; or he was in his study working, and over and over again she thought of crossing the hall to go to him. It was evening, and he would be putting some coins away in the little shallow drawers, and she pictured the look on his face as he turned round and saw her. More than once she started to her feet. Why did all her limbs feel so numb?

Of Anthi she saw very little.

The child had been taken to Polymnia's to stay with her girls; her mother, they told her, was ill and tired and must not have little children in the house for some days. She fretted a little for a day or two, but she had her nurse with her, and her little cousins who were her devoted slaves, and she was soon content with the change. Every two or three days Vasiliki would bring her at noon to see her mother, but the latter seemed rather to shrink from the child.

She would kiss her when Anthi ran up to her, suffer her chatter for two or three minutes with tightened lips, and send her away to play in the other room.

"Later on," she said one day; "later on, she shall come to me when I can bear the light better; not just yet. A dark house is not good for a child." And she moved slowly to the window and closed the shutters, shutting out the sunlight.

Monsieur Arnoux, who had been ill for some days with a sort of nervous fever, came to her as soon as he could get into a carriage, but he broke down so badly on seeing her that they took him out of the room at once. It was Miss Burney who passed her arm through his and took him into the study.

She made him sit down in Metro's chair and stood over him, patting his shoulder with shaking hands. "Don't mind me, Monsieur Arnoux! Don't, now! Have n't I been through it all myself? Indeed, and I have!"

Monsieur Arnoux sat up and wiped his eyes, unashamed. "Mademoiselle, I have no words to thank you for your goodness and your sympathy. If you would so kind, ask the maid to give me her arm downstairs, I will go now. I should not have come. I am of no use to the poor child; on the contrary, I should do her harm. You all, who are younger than I am, will help her and console her, in time."

"Younger, is it?" For the first time, perhaps, in her life there was a little bitterness in Miss Burney's voice. "For my part, I do what I can, but the youth-feeling, the strong-feeling, has gone out of me at last! The years are taking their revenge for all the time that I have laughed at them."

"Ah, no! It is not the succeeding years that make a man or a woman old; it is the succeeding griefs!"

And he looked so frail and helpless that Miss Burney turned comforter once more. "Don't you be losing courage

now, Monsieur Arnoux! What will his wife and child do without you? There will be plenty of happy days for you with them yet!"

Monsieur Arnoux shook his white head. "No, mademoiselle, there are some unmendable breaks. Will the sunken ship rise to the surface again, however calm the sea after the storm?"

And then he went slowly downstairs, leaning heavily on Triantafyllia's stout arm.

Theodora heard the slow, heavy tread, and when Triantafyllia came up again she called her. "Listen; next time you see Vasiliki, tell her, in case I forget, that she must take Anthi to see Monsieur Arnoux. She knows the house." And to Zoe she added, "The child will do him good, and for her sake he will keep up." Then turning again to the maid, "Don't forget, Triantafyllia!"

And Triantafyllia promised and escaped to the kitchen to cry.

As the days passed, Theodora slept less and less. It was as though the first stunning effect of the blow had brought stupor in its wake, and that now every cell of her brain and every tissue of her body were slowly awaking to pain. One morning Zoe found her in her bedroom in the same chair in which she had left her the previous evening; a burned-out candle was beside her, and her eyes, dark with misery and a night of sleeplessness, were like two black hollows in the drawn, white face.

A little later Theodora looked up from the breakfast tray which had been set beside her and said suddenly: "Zoe, I want Kyra Sophoula."

"What?" asked Zoe, bewildered.

"I want Kyra Sophoula," she repeated clearly; "the old woman, from Poros."

"Very well," said Zoe; "I will send for her."

She arranged with her father and sent a clerk from the bank to Poros to fetch her. And Kyra Sophoula,

who had never failed any one in her whole long life, came the next day, bent and wrinkled beyond description, her brave, old eyes dulled and sunken with much weeping.

And Theodora sat for hours with her head in the old woman's lap; and the only thing which seemed to bring her a little quiet and a little sleep was the motion of the roughened, old hands stroking her hair constantly and slowly.

Then Anthi was brought home, and having had her little brain puzzled by Vasiliki's confused explanation of a good old dame who was paying a visit to her mother, an old dame who was like a grandmother to her father when he was a little boy, simplified matters by looking up at Kyra Sophoula approvingly, and calling her "Yiayia!"

A tremulous joy passed over the old woman's face, but she conscientiously tried to correct the child's mistake. "I am not thy grandmother, my little bird — " she began.

But Theodora, bending over the fire, spoke without turning her head. "Let her be! You were more than a mother to her father; what other grandmother should she have?"

So "Yiayia" Kyra Sophoula remained for Anthi, and each time the poor old creature heard the word a little life came into the sunken eyes.

One day a message came from the hospital that one of the patients in Theodora's wards was worse, and had been asking for her, and she went there and sat with him for a long time, and after that she fell into the way of spending two or three hours there every afternoon, and one day she went to see her Cousin Roxane, who was recovering from bronchitis. She met two or three people there whom she knew, and when others stopped her on her way backward and forward from the hospital, she did not try to avoid them.

Then it was that she felt for the first time the inevitable

law of the world: that no one sorrow, no one individual grief may take up too much space or undue time. Others grieve for you, pity you, join in your outcries against destiny while the blow is recent, but the clock ticks on, the minutes pass, the days pass, other griefs take up the world's attention and sympathy, and your special one, your overpowering one, is crowded out, left behind! This is the unchanging law.

But what irritated her almost beyond bearing was the importance given to non-essentials.

"If it pleases me," she said one day violently to Kyra Sophoula, after an endless discussion between a dressmaker and her assistant about the correct depth of a crape hem, "I will go out in a red dress! Is it *that* which matters?"

But Kyra Sophoula, being of the people, did not understand at all, and being also quite uncertain of what a descendant of kings might not be capable, dwelt for many days in terror of this threat of a red dress being realized and of the fame of it reaching Poros; for her world was there.

Polymnia, whom Theodora met as she was returning from the hospital in the mild warmth of a February afternoon, and whom she offered to accompany to her house, demurred slightly. "But, of course, my dear Theodora, if you like. Only, you understand, we shall have to cross the Academy Road and now at this time there are a good many people about; perhaps — don't you think — ?"

"Speak out!" said Theodora impatiently; "don't I think what? That I may be accused of taking a walk for pleasure, and of not keeping my mourning strictly enough? I very probably shall. Well, do *you* care? for *I* very certainly do not. If you object to being seen in the company of one who is breaking this terrific law of correct mourning, say so! and I will go home!"

Polymnia at once became apologetic. "My dear girl, how can you say such a thing? As if I could mean — ?"

But she had meant it all the same.

As they crossed the Kolonaki Square, Polymnia spoke of a letter from Costa received that morning and written from the hospital in Chios.

"From the hospital? Why?"

"Because of his arm; it is all very well his telling me not to worry, but I *am* worrying. It began with a scratch, and then went on to a sling and his having to write with his left hand, and now he is in the hospital about it. However, the good thing is that they are going to let him come home very soon."

"Really?"

"Yes; he does not say for how long a leave, but I shall be grateful for even a few days. He assures me that he will have no more trouble with his arm and that he may be here any day. Won't it be good to have him back?"

Polymnia was a kind-hearted creature who never meant to hurt any one, but she did not tread lightly.

There was a moment's silence. "Yes," assented Theodora in a low voice, "it will be very good."

Two days later the impossible happened, or what the military world had called impossible. After three months' siege Yannina had fallen before the Crown Prince's successful arms, and the war, as experts said, was practically over. The delight and the excitement in Athens were even greater than they had been when Salonica was taken. Almost the whole population had poured itself out into the streets and squares to hear every possible detail of the victory and to listen to the joy-bells.

One of the few exceptions was Zoe. She had been to the hospital in the morning, and the wounded soldiers had found their "little lady" as bright as ever, as she

distributed tiny flags to them, and had the bottles of wine opened which she had brought with her, so that they might drink to the great day, and to the health of their brave Prince; but in the early afternoon she remained at home and was sitting listlessly over the fire in the library.

Though it was late in February the day was chilly.

Her father came in with his hat in his hand. "You have had a fire lighted; rather a good idea! Are you not going out, though?"

"I think not, father; I've got a little cold, too; nothing much; just an excuse for laziness. Did you want me to come anywhere with you?"

"Not at all: only too glad to see you taking care of yourself, once in a way." Then, as he took his cigarette case out of his pocket, he said: "By the way, Zoe, I've been meaning to tell you something. Do you know that out of all this terrible misfortune, one good thing may result for Theodora?"

"A good thing — for Theodora?"

"It seems so. You know, since Karvalli's sudden death the Legation in Rome is vacant again; there is only a chargé d'affaires left there for the present. Well, the day before yesterday, I was at the Ministry, in Andriotti's private office, when to my great astonishment who should walk in but old Douka! I thought him in Paris, but it seems he had just returned. He was all milk and honey to Andriotti, who, on the other hand, was correct, but most certainly not cordial. I left them talking and told myself, as I went off, that Douka was at his old tricks again, and that the moment he had heard of the vacancy in Rome he had started back here to lay siege to the only member of the Cabinet he knew, however slightly, and I confess I was quite pleased to think that he had come to the wrong man, for I knew that Andriotti would never lift a finger to help him.

However, it seems I did the old man an injustice. I happened to see Andriotti again last night, and he told me that he had had precisely the same suspicion, but that Douka never even alluded to Rome. All his talk was of Theodora; he said that, as soon as he had heard of her great loss, he had started at once for Athens. That the only wish left to him now is that he may be of some little comfort to his poor daughter in her grief. He confessed that he ought to have returned at the very beginning of the war and have been reconciled to both of them, because, he says, in such moments of national crisis all private prejudices and differences of opinion should be wiped away. He told Andriotti quite plainly that one of his bitterest regrets will always be that before his son-in-law left to fight for Greece, he was not here to grasp his hand at least once! Andriotti says he spoke beautifully."

"I have not the slightest doubt that he did. But all the same, father, you were perfectly right in your first impression."

"How do you mean?"

"I mean, that though, as you say, he never even distantly alluded to the Roman post, it was in his mind the whole time, and the *sole* object of his return here."

"But, my dear Zoe — "

"But, my dear father, he is a *very* clever man! We have always known that. Don't you think he knows perfectly that after his treatment of Metro, of Andriotti's greatest friend, he would have no manner of chance of obtaining any help from him; on the contrary, that he would put every spoke he could in his wheel? But to persuade Andriotti to speak for him to Theodora; to play the remorseful old parent; to work on Andriotti's feelings, and make him help to bring them together, that is child's play! And then, after a decent interval, when he and his daughter are once more all in all to each other, do you

think that Andriotti would refuse to do anything that Theodora might ask for her father?"

Andrea Lara whistled slowly. "I do believe you have hit it, Zoe!"

"I know I have. But my one consolation is that he will have all his sly planning for nothing, because the only factor in the case of which he is perfectly sure will fail him."

"And that is?"

"Theodora; who, if I know anything of her, will refuse to see him!"

"Theodora! Are you mad, my child?"

"Not at all. I know all she has gone through. Do you imagine that now she has lost Metro, she will open her arms to the man who helped to make life harder for him? To the man who looked on him with disdain from the height of his noble birth, and who comes forward *now*, when the man she loved is dead, and says, 'You have got rid of your low-born husband, I will graciously condescend to acknowledge you again as my daughter'? Not she! Not if he were fifty times her father!"

"But he says — "

"All he may say will be of no avail. The time for phrases is over; she has lived with a man who acted instead of talking."

Andrea Lara never cared much for discussions. "Well, perhaps you are right. You know her better."

He stepped behind Zoe, to take a box of matches from the mantel-shelf, and as he did so his foot touched a large open basket covered with sheets of newspaper.

"What is that?"

Zoe hesitated a second. "Just some papers and music and books which I brought down to sort over."

Her father looked at her questioningly. "Is it — are they — his?"

She nodded; and there was silence for a few minutes.

Then Andrea Lara stooped and kissed her, though caresses were rather rare between them. "Take care of yourself!" he muttered rather huskily, and left the room.

Zoe began her task almost at once. The music she separated into two heaps, locking one into the cabinet beside her, and putting the other aside for distribution to some friends of Nasso's who had asked for it. The books were few and in a very tattered condition; these she placed on the floor to be taken upstairs. Then she turned to the piles of old copy-books and sketch-books and tried to separate them, but there were sketches all over the margins of the exercises, and sums and grammar rules all over the sketch-books. Nasso had never seen the use of going upstairs for a copy-book, if a sketch-book had been more handy, or of not drawing caricatures because there was nothing but a lesson-book to draw them on.

Zoe came across a figure intended for their Aunt Virginia in the act of administering medicine to a very recalcitrant under-housemaid. She remembered the episode. As she closed the book she could see Nasso, with the clearness and precision of actual vision, bending over the table in the old schoolroom, his curly head almost resting on his arm, and laughing to himself as the caricature grew in perfection.

For a moment she hid her face in her hands. "Ah, little hollowhead! little hollowhead!"

From the farther end of the dining room it seemed to her that her sigh was echoed. She listened for a moment. There was a slight clatter as of knives and forks being laid together. "Who is there?"

"It is I, Kyria Zoe." And Yanni, the elderly man-servant, advanced to the open folding doors. "Do you want anything?"

"No; nothing particular. When you go downstairs

you might tell Calliope to come and take some of these books to my room."

"Calliope is out, Kyria Zoe; I will take them."

"True, I forgot; they will do afterwards." Then she added: "Yanni, why don't you go out also? Such a great day as it is to-day! There will be much to see and to hear. If I want tea, Anna will bring it."

"I thank you, Kyria Zoe, but I have no heart to go out to-day. A great day, of course, but I have no heart for rejoicing and shouting! When I think of all the brave lads Yannina has cost us!"

She looked at the man, feeling sure that he was thinking of some one in particular. "Is it some friend of yours who has been killed, Yanni? I know you have no brothers in the war."

"No brothers, but cousins, Kyria Zoe, and we were so united, it was the same. Do you remember the old washerwoman, my aunt, who used to come to us until she got rheumatism in her legs and could not stand at the washtub any longer?"

"Kyra Stamata? Of course I do."

"Well, both her sons were outside Bizani. The first one was killed twenty days ago, now, at the great attack; she got a letter from the second one, who saw his brother killed before his eyes, and helped to bury him. Two days after he also was wounded and was taken to the hospital, and last night, when I was at my aunt's, the poor, unfortunate one got another letter to say that they have had to cut his leg off. One boy gone, and the other a cripple for life! And fine lads both of them, as tall and as straight as cypress trees!"

"Oh, poor thing!" cried Zoe. "How terrible! I must go and see her."

"You would do her an honor, Kyria Zoe."

"What were their names?"

"Demetrius and Michali."

"And their other name? I don't think I ever heard Kyra Stamata's surname."

"Phidippides."

"Phidippides," Zoe repeated the name slowly with a puzzled expression. "And which was the one who was killed?"

"The eldest; Demetrius. A sergeant he was, too; poor lad! It was not a month ago that he had been promoted, and my aunt bought wine that we might drink to his 'stripe.'"

Once more, with a half-abstracted frown on her forehead, Zoe repeated the name slowly. "Demetrius Phidippides." Suddenly she gave a little start and turned toward Yanni. "You are quite sure he was killed?"

The man looked at her bewildered. "If I am sure? It would be well if I were not. If he were only missing, or even a prisoner, there might be some hope; but his brother saw him almost cut in two before his very eyes. It was on January the 28th, just when the great attack was nearly over."

The frown on Zoe's face deepened. She walked toward the fire and stood there a moment with her elbows on the mantel-shelf and her head between her hands; then she looked at the clock. It was nearly three: then she walked to the window. The sky was gray and leaden, but it was not raining.

"Yanni!" she called. The man, who had gone back to the dining room, came forward. "Tell Stathi — no, go yourself and fetch me a carriage! Anything you can find. And — quickly, please!"

A quarter of an hour later Zoe was toiling up the steep staircase of the Ministry of Arts and Crafts, repeating to herself with each step as she mounted: "I am a fool, a fool, a fool!" And as she reached the landing she muttered: "He will not even be here probably on such a day."

But Andriotti was at his post. He intended that his next Ministry should be a more important one, and he believed in hard work at all times and seasons. He rose at once from his desk, but showed no astonishment at the visit.

"Mademoiselle Lara; delighted to see you in my domain! Sit here, please, and tell me what I can do for you."

Zoe sat down. "Will you tell me, are copies of all the lists of the killed and wounded and prisoners kept at the War Office?"

"Not only there; all the Ministries have copies sent to them."

"Then will you let me see the list of casualties of the last great attack on Bizani; it was on a Monday."

"You mean the one where — ?"

"Yes; that one."

Again he showed no astonishment, but rising, opened a set of pigeon-holes behind him, and after a brief search brought out a long, type-written list of names.

"Here it is, at your service."

"No; I want *you* to look over it. Will you please look very carefully all down the list of the names of those killed outside Bizani, on January the 28th, and tell me if you come across the name of a certain infantry sergeant called 'Demetrius Phidippides'? Yes, just as I say it, 'Phi-*d*ip-pides.' He was a cousin of our manservant, and I know, as a certain fact from an eye-witness, that he was killed then and there; and I want the official confirmation of the fact."

Instead of looking at the list in his hand, Andriotti fixed his eyes steadily on Zoe's.

"Yes," she said; "I know you think me mad. But please look!"

He took a pencil and carefully went down the long strip of paper. The names were not arranged alphabetically,

but by ranks and companies, which made the task longer. At last he looked up and there was a frown on his forehead.

"There is no such name."

Zoe rose from her seat. "You are sure?"

"Perfectly. I have checked every one."

"Is — is — Metro's there?"

"Of course."

There was a moment's silence, and then Andriotti asked: "Who told you of this other man?"

"Yanni, our servant."

"Was he there? Is he a soldier?"

"No; he is too old."

"Then how is he so certain?"

"This cousin of his, this Demetrius Phidippides, had a younger brother fighting by his side, who wrote to tell their mother that he saw him cut almost in two, and helped to bury him!"

There was another pause. Then Andriotti, the frown deepening, said: "It is very strange, most extraordinary, that there should be no mention of this man in the list! I must telegraph early to-morrow, — to-day I am afraid the wires will be all occupied. In the mean time you understand, not a word, not a syllable, to — to any one; it would be too cruel, if — "

"That is just what I was going to beg of you."

There was a knock at the door, and a clerk came in with a shallow basket full of letters in his hand.

"I beg Your Excellency's pardon," he said, "but Kyrios Pastorides had to leave in a great hurry. They sent for him from the War Office. He told me to tell you that these letters have all been passed. If you would only be kind enough, he begged, to give orders for their distribution."

"Very well. Leave them here."

Then, as the clerk left, Andriotti explained: "The Censure is in the same building, and Pastorides is a

friend of mine. Excuse me one second. I always want the families to get the letters from their soldiers the first moment possible."

Taking from a table behind him a leather bag fitted with a small padlock, he proceeded to pack the letters from the basket into it.

Once he grasped too big a handful and five or six letters were scattered on the floor. He stooped rapidly to pick them up.

Suddenly he rose, holding one only in his hand, and leaving the others lying where they had fallen; and when Zoe looked at him, she saw that he had turned very pale.

"What is it?"

He stood like a man in a trance, holding the letter toward her. "Look!"

It was addressed to Theodora; and there was no doubt possible. The writing — clear, round, and characteristic — was Metro's!

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE two looked at each other as though they had been stricken dumb. Andriotti stood with the letter still held out in his hand and Zoe kept hers outstretched toward it.

"The postmark!" she gasped at last.

He snatched back the letter and turned toward the window.

"February the 15th!" Then, seeing Zoe's face, he added quickly: "You understand, that is no proof! The letter may have been written before — and others may have delayed sending it. There is always so much disorder, unavoidably."

"Of course, I understand."

She made a step forward and took the letter in her hand. "Yes, February the 15th. It is quite clear."

For a few moments again they looked at each other in silence. Then Andriotti asked: "What would be best? Shall I take it to her, or will you?"

"I — don't — know." But the words seemed to be spoken mechanically, and Zoe stood quite still, the letter in her hand, and the other pressed against her lips. Suddenly she burst forth: "I want to open this letter!"

"To open it!"

"Yes, to open it, and see whether it was written before — before he was reported killed, or if this mad suspicion of mine — no, of ours, for you cannot deny that it has crossed your mind also — may be blessedly true."

"But — "

"No, wait! Let me tell you! If this is an old letter written before, and delayed, she may glance at the postmark first; and that, as you said, would be cruel. In

any case, even if she does not, the letter will always be a shock; and if — if — he should be alive — well, they say joy never kills, but she is not very strong just now, and it might hurt her. While, you see, if we *know* — then it is so easy. Either we shall tell her, 'This is a delayed letter written before your husband was killed,' or else we can prepare her gently for the joy to come. You see the Censure makes it so easy; she knows the letter must have been opened before it reaches her. Think! Think! And you will agree with me; I am *sure* I am right. This is not the moment for conventions!"

"But honestly I do not know whether I am justified in — "

"In allowing me to open it! Of course you are not! We both know that. But you are going to, all the same."

Andriotti's only answer was to take a paper-knife from his desk, slit open the envelope, draw out the letter, and hand it to Zoe.

It was a short letter, and there was an enclosure in another handwriting. Zoe looked rapidly at the date, and at the opening lines, then gave a great cry: "Oh, thank God! Thank God! Thank God!"

Andriotti with dilated eyes seized hold of her hand. "It can't be true!"

"But it is! It is! See there! The date is February the 14th in his very own handwriting. Look! He writes from the hospital, you see."

And together they read the following lines: —

So, you see, you must not be anxious, my wife, as it was the very lightest form of pneumonia and is already over. I have made the doctor write it to you himself, and you see, too, what he says about my wonderful constitution. I am writing hurriedly because it was only yesterday that the body of the poor soldier who was laden with two weeks' mail from here was found near a Turkish outpost, so that I know you have been without news of me, and may have been uneasy.

"*May* have been uneasy," repeated Zoe, with the tears streaming down her face. "Oh, poor Theodora! Poor Theodora!"

"I thought," said Andriotti in a low voice, "that I had lost the best friend I ever had, and now — Glory be to God." And he made the sign of the cross very reverently.

"Oh!" — there was another cry from Zoe, but this time it was almost one of fear. "Look at this!"

There was a postscript on the back page of the letter. Metro wrote that at the last moment before the post left, he had been granted sick-leave for convalescence at home, that he was considered fit to start at once, and would be in Athens, perhaps, as soon as his letter.

"Kyrie Andriotti, help me, please, to get downstairs quickly! I have a carriage which I told to wait for me. And if you can, will you come with me? If only we can be in time!"

But they were not.

On that same afternoon Theodora was alone in her sitting room. Kyra Sophoula, escorted by Triantafyllia, had gone to discover a certain young girl from Poros who was in service in Athens, to whom she had a parcel to deliver. Anthi, with her nurse, was at the Manellis'. Aglaia was supposed to be in her kitchen, but as a matter of fact she had gone round the corner to the greengrocer's to get some lemons.

Theodora was sitting beside the fireplace, her hands lying loosely on her knees. The little flames, on which her unseeing eyes were fixed, leaped and crackled higher at first, then lower and lower until the big logs crumbled and fell away in heaps of soft ashes. There was a ring at the street door. She waited to hear Aglaia cross the hall to pull open the cord which opened it. But there were no steps, and the ring was repeated a second time, and again a third.

She rose listlessly and went out into the hall.

Some time ago she would have been very vexed with the cook for leaving the house alone when Triantafyllia was out. Now, it did not seem worth even the trouble of a remark to the culprit when she returned.

Theodora opened the glass door, and pulling the cord leaned over the balustrade, and called out: "Who is there?"

A boy's voice answered her from below.

"It is the newspaper; the 'Hestia.'" Then, imagining it was the servant who spoke to him, he called out indignantly: "I can't lose all my day, ringing at your door; another time if you are not quicker I won't leave the newspaper at all!" And Theodora heard the rustle of the paper flung inside and the patter of the boy's feet running away.

By the rush of cold air she understood that he had left the front door open. If it had not been for that she would not have taken the trouble of fetching the newspaper. As it was, she went slowly downstairs and, before closing the door, stood for a moment on the step, looking down the street, to see if Anthi were in sight.

It was cold, and she shivered a little, and wrapped a dull black scarf she was wearing more tightly round her shoulders.

Far away in the distance the figure of a soldier was crossing the Kiphissia Road and coming in the direction of the little church.

Theodora's eyes rested on him idly as she turned to reënter the house, but before she could close the door she stopped short.

For a moment it had seemed to her as though the man were making a sign, but she found it difficult to distinguish anything. There seemed to be a mist before her eyes.

The figure came closer — and closer — and closer —

It was Metro!

In two bounds he was beside her. There was almost a wild light in his eyes as he snatched the black scarf from her shoulders and flung it violently into the street.

"Black for me! Not yet, my sweet wife! Not yet! Not yet!"

He lifted her in his arms and carried her up the stairs, holding her tightly against him.

Theodora had not fainted, but her head fell back against his shoulder, and for a second her brain whirled and she was very near unconsciousness.

But the face pressed against hers was real, and his tears were wet on her cheek.

"They told me, my golden love — they told me what they made you believe; but I am here! I am here! I am yours!"

And as she felt his lips on hers, she knew that it was well with her as long as he lived.

CHAPTER XXXVII

No one of the outside world came near them for the rest of that evening. Zoe and Andriotti, who had followed post-haste about an hour after Metro's arrival, had heard the joyful news from the excited Aglaia and had silently stolen away again.

Kyra Sophoula, who on her return had been gently prepared by Theodora, had scarcely taken her shaking old arms from around her "boy" before she insisted on going out again to the little church opposite, to light a candle before the icon of St. Nicholas.

"For the miracle is his, my daughter! Was it not to him that I prayed as soon as I heard that Metro had been taken away in a big ship; and has he not brought him safely back, although we lacked faith, and believed him killed?"

And with the two maids following humbly in her wake, she went at once; so that St. Nicholas got his candle that same night.

Anthi was the one of the household who was the least excited. Her baba had come home. That was, of course, quite a natural and long-expected event. She could not in the least understand why it should make all the grown-up people clasp her tightly and cry over her. There was also a very decided disappointment in that he had arrived so prosaically in the afternoon while she was out, and not in the "middel of the night," in which case it had been a sacred promise that she should sit up for him. However, her father consoled her by a new promise. On the Sunday evening she was to sit up as long as she liked, and he would tell her stories.

"We will finish the Pasha with the slippers, which you left in the middel when you wented away, my baba!"

"Of course we will."

It was not until the next morning that Metro, standing close to Theodora, said very gently: "I did not tell you that I met Costa yesterday at the station; he had just come up from Piræus returning from Chios."

"Has he returned already? I knew he was expected any day on convalescent leave. How is his arm?"

But Metro was holding her hand and kissing the palm of it and did not answer.

"He wrote," continued Theodora, "that he did not think he would have any more trouble with it, after leaving the hospital."

"No," answered Metro gravely; "it will not trouble him any more."

But something in his voice arrested Theodora, and she looked up at him startled.

"How do you mean?"

Metro held her close to him and kissed her eyelids. "Costa has lost his arm, my child; there was no way of saving it."

"Oh, Metro! Metro!" And she began to cry a little quietly. "Poor Costa! And the right arm too!"

"I cannot tell you how simple and brave he was about it! He had telegraphed to Marco Delamana to let his wife prepare Polymnia, and to come himself to meet him at Piræus, but he would scarcely let either of us help him much. 'I mean to become very independent with my one arm,' he kept saying; 'and it is never too soon to begin.' You will go and see them to-day, will you not, my wife?"

She hesitated a second and passed her arm through his. "You will come with me?"

"I will take you to the door, and then I will go on to

Monsieur Arnoux's. You sent the letter that you wrote to him, last night, did you not?"

"Of course I did! I would not keep his joy from him for a second — the poor 'Master'!" Then in a moment she added: "I will call there for you, Metro, afterwards. I cannot bear to have you away from me for any long time yet!"

A light came into Metro's eyes, and his voice trembled a little as he said: "Let us go, then."

But before they could leave the house, Andriotti arrived. He flung himself on Metro, and it was some little time before he could speak. "Do you remember," he said afterwards to Theodora, "one day at your uncle's, the first time I had the pleasure of meeting you, saying that you did not understand appreciating anything more because of having missed it? Well, it seems I do. Until I thought I had lost my friend — I never knew how much I cared!"

They talked for some time, Andriotti asking question after question about the places, the fighting, the spirit of the men, the management of the hospitals, the general organization, to all of which Metro had ready answers, and this, as Andriotti said, was only a slight foretaste of the whole history of the siege of Yannina which all his friends meant to obtain from Metro detail by detail.

Then Andriotti asked Metro to take him for a few moments into his study. When they came out of it, after five minutes' talk, there was a look in Metro's eyes of joyful bewilderment. However, he only asked Theodora to put her hat on, so that they might all leave the house together.

As they walked down the Kiphissia Road the talk turned to the Manellis, and Metro told them that, while Costa was in the hospital in Chios, during the days after the amputation of his arm, the officer in the bed next

to his had been the one who had last seen Nasso alive, and who had climbed the hills, and fought, and camped with him, for a month before the end. It was evident, Costa had said, that this man had succumbed to the boy's charm, and he spoke of him as though they had been lifelong friends instead of acquaintances of weeks only.

"Ah," said Theodora, "I must tell Costa to go and see Zoe — I mean the Laras, as soon as he can."

"He means to," said Metro.

When, about an hour later, Theodora rang at the door of Monsieur Arnoux's house, it was Metro himself who opened it for her.

"I was just coming for you," he said.

"Monsieur Arnoux is upstairs, is he not? Shall I go up to him?"

"Not just now. He is coming to us on Sunday, and the bells have already rung for noon."

"Was he — ?"

"Yes," assented Metro; "he was very glad."

But he never said anything more about that first meeting, even to Theodora.

He was rather silent as they walked home, but as soon as they reached the house he followed Theodora into their bedroom and waited while she took off her outdoor things, sitting awkwardly on the arm of the couch near her toilet table.

His gaze drew hers, and suddenly she let the veil she was holding drop to the floor, and put both hands on his shoulders.

Slowly she let her cheek rest on his hair and with her face hidden murmured: "Ah, dear love, how good it is! If you knew — all the days I thought it would never be again!"

His arms went round her. "It is even better than good,

my wife." Then, as she did not speak but only pressed her face closer to his, he continued: "It is even far better than you know."

She looked up, astonished. "How can that be?"

"Sit here while I tell you!" And he drew her down beside him. "Tell me what thing is lacking still that your happiness should be complete?"

She shook her head. "I can think of nothing!"

"Are you sure, nothing? Think well!"

"Metro, even when that happens of which I told you last night, — even when I bear you, perhaps, — a son, to carry on your name, — even then I do not think I can be happier than now."

Metro's eyes filled with a tender light, but he persisted. "Think! Think of something which has seemed for so long impossible."

"What, Metro? I cannot!"

"Well, I must not torment you, my wife. Listen! I will tell you in two words. Andriotti told me, just now, that your father started to come here from Paris as soon as he heard that — as every one thought — you had been left alone in the world, and that, after hearing yesterday of my safe return, he wrote this morning to Andriotti to ask us what day and hour we can fix for him — your father — to come to us!"

He waited for her exclamation, but she was silent.

"Theodora, do you hear? Your father is coming to us! You will hear his voice in our house as you longed to do! You will see our child in his arms! And I cannot tell you what a joy it is to me that it should be from my lips that you hear it!"

Then she spoke, but rather slowly: "I like all good things to come to me from you, my Metro, and I am glad of this decision of my father's, because in the eyes of the world I prefer that families should be united, but — but otherwise I don't think I care very much."

"You — don't care?" he gasped, holding her away from him.

"Not very much — now!"

"But why?"

"Because a great gladness leaves no room for smaller ones: because, since you have come back to me — what else matters?"

Metro caught her almost roughly by the shoulders and looked into her eyes, and then he saw —

And as he caught her to him, and held her close, she heard the great sobs that seemed to be torn out of his very heart.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

It was early in the afternoon of the next day, and Zoe was sitting by the fire in the library hemming a nurse's cap. Hearing some one at the door, she turned her head away irritably, supposing it was Aunt Virginia, coming home with the list of what she had found, or not found, at the shops.

The door opened, and Yanni's voice said: "The master is out, Kyrie Manelli, but Kyria Zoe is here."

A quiet, familiar voice answered: "Thank you, Yanni."

Then she heard the door close again, and Costa Manelli's steps came up to where she sat. At the last moment she rose from her chair, and then started violently, and caught her breath at the sight of the empty sleeve pinned upon his breast.

She had thought, before seeing him, that she had imagined it just as it would be, but the impression was that of a sudden blinding blow across her face that blurred her sight for an instant, and she instinctively put her hand up to her eyes, staggering a little. Costa sprang forward, and catching her very deftly with his left arm made her sit down in the big armchair.

"It was very stupid of me!" he said; "I ought not to have come in without asking first if you would see me. I told Theodora yesterday that I would come and tell you myself all about poor Nasso; but of course my coming in unannounced has upset you."

"About — Nasso?" she stammered; "no, Theodora did not tell me; I did not see her to-day."

"I knew you would wish to hear all that I can tell you. I thought for a moment of writing to your father from

Chios, but there is always so much that one cannot write; and the first days at the hospital I had a good deal of fever, and they made rather a fuss about my sitting up for long. But now I want to tell you all I heard about him; the brave lad!"

"Stop!" Zoe sprang up, and stood before him. "Stop! You will tell me all you can, please, in a minute. But there is something I must say, first of all, before anything else. Did you have a letter from me very soon after you left?"

"No; I received nothing."

"Then, since you did not get it" — and her voice was lower — "I want to ask your forgiveness for the brutal words I said to you on that day, before your father — before I knew —"

Costa did not pretend for an instant not to understand. "It was quite natural."

"It was *not*," she contradicted fiercely.

"Every one was justified in thinking as you did. I had made up my mind that I should have to face that."

"But not from me! I ought to have known. I think I *did* know somehow inside me, but I hated so much that any one should have any excuse for thinking — *that thing*. It made me want to hit out blindly; to hurt some one. Can you forgive me?"

"You are always forgiven, whatever you may say."

She did not answer at once, only her hands tightened on each other until the knuckles whitened. Then in a moment: "You are very good to me! Now sit down here in this chair and tell me about Nasso. Or no, forgive me again! Tell me about yourself first! You must have suffered so much —"

"Thank you. There is nothing to tell; I am quite well — now."

Costa sat down opposite to her, his elbow leaning on the arm of the chair, his face resting on his hand.

"The officer from whom I heard all this — a captain

in the artillery, called Pollides, a very nice man — was in the next bed to mine in the hospital."

"I have heard the name. What was the matter with him?"

"A rifle ball in the shoulder. He was luckier than I was," Costa added simply, "from the fact that, though not dangerous, his wound had been bad enough to require immediate attention. Well, he had been the superior officer from which the landing party of sailors commanded by Nasso took its instructions, and as they were more than a month in the interior of Chios, climbing hills, taking villages, storming old forts, and so on, you understand that they were thrown very much together. And believe me, to hear this man speak of Nasso, you would think he had known him always. Of course those days of hardship and danger count more than double; I know that; but he learned to — to love him very sincerely. I hope you will let me bring him to see you, when he returns to Athens. He will be able, also, to tell you so much more than I can."

"I was going to ask you," said Zoe.

"Pollides told me that, knowing Nasso as I did, I could understand how thoroughly he was the life and joy and energy of the expedition, but that what no one, who had not fought by his side, could know was to what a degree he influenced the men. Under him cowards became brave, and brave men, heroes! It was like, he said, the same violin scraped on by a beggar in the street or played by Kubelik! You understand?"

"Oh, yes!" said Zoe, her eyes shining; "I understand!"

"I will not go into all the military details about the pass he had to defend, nor of the absolute necessity that the Turks should be kept at bay as long as possible. I need only tell you that, according to Pollides, the time gained that day conduced in a great measure to the liberation of the whole island of Chios. Nasso, as you know,

received the order to stay in that narrow pass between the two mountains with his men. He knew quite well what staying meant. He was far too good a soldier not to know. I will not insult him by saying he never hesitated; that goes without saying. But, as Pollides told me,"—and Costa's voice broke a little, — "he stayed so simply. There was no attempt at any last words, at any high-flown language; there was not a trace of the 'We-lay-down-our-lives-for-our-country' style. He never even said, what some of the newspapers wrote, 'We will be killed to the last man before we let those old Turks get through.' He knew they would, so why talk about it, and why sadden the others whose duty it equally was to lead the other men to safety in the opposite direction, and leave him there? He only said, 'Be easy, my captain! I will report everything that happens, when we meet to-morrow.'"

"And there was no to-morrow!" whispered Zoe, the tears streaming down her face.

Costa drew a long breath and, standing up, laid his hand lightly on hers.

"I wish he could have known," he said, "how he helped me always! How just knowing him helped every one. I never knew a gentler soul!" And he bowed his head as at the uplifting of the Host.

After he had spoken the last words there was silence for a few minutes. Then Zoe wiped her tears away, and lifted her head almost proudly.

"Our brave boy! Our Nasso! We will talk of him very often in the days to come — Costa!"

Manelli started.

"You must often repeat to me how he died that I may never forget how the simplest, brightest boy may be a man and a hero when the moment calls him. We — will always remember him — Costa — and talk of him, when we are old people — together!"

"Stop!" Costa put his hand to his head; "what are you saying?"

Zoe's voice as she answered was quite firm and clear. "I am saying what I know you never would — and what you never will, now!"

Costa walked as far as the window, and stood there for a moment, leaning against the frame. Zoe, sitting upright with her hands lying open on her knees and her lips trembling, watched him in silence.

Presently, he came back and stood before her. "I shall never forget what you have just said to me," — and his voice was scarcely audible; "it will remain a very beautiful memory in my solitary life. But now, you must please excuse me if I leave you — I am not quite strong yet — as you see."

Zoe shivered and looked up at him, as he stood before her. "Then you do not care for me? You have never cared?"

His face was very white and his lips tightened. "Why do you make it hard for me?"

"Because I *will* not let you leave me with words unspoken between us which I shall be fancying over and over again in the long nights when I lie awake. If there is any misunderstanding, it must be cleared up here and now! I *will* not suffer patiently and resignedly and stupidly for years, as some women can, because convention may ordain that I ought to be silent. Life is too short for that! If a thing is inevitable, then only I shall know how to bear it."

"There is no misunderstanding. How can I let the world say, what it surely would, that I waited to come into your life until I was a crippled unfortunate needing your help?"

"You let others think and call you a coward, so as to save your father from suffering! Can you bear nothing for me?"

"I could bear hell itself! But — do not tempt me! Even were I base enough to profit by your noble devotion, by your generous pity —"

"Pity!" With a little sob Zoe bent forward and laid both hands on his empty sleeve. "Are you thinking that *this* — has anything to do with it? It has nothing! Nothing in the world! Oh, *how* shall I make you believe me? Costa! Costa! — can't you see?"

He shivered and stood still. "Is it true?" he whispered at last. "Are you sure it is true?"

Zoe raised her head slowly and looked into his eyes. His hand, which was lying on hers, trembled and grew cold.

For a moment there was no sound in the room, and then Costa knelt down and hid his face on Zoe's knees.

Of course neither Monsieur Arnoux, nor Miss Burney, nor Costa, nor Zoe was present at the first interview between Michael Douka and his daughter; but on the Sunday afternoon following, when they found him at Metro's and Theodora's house, they were each of them in their different ways struck with the unerring tact with which this perfect diplomat managed the situation.

No one could have imagined that any break had preceded the family gathering. At most, it might have been supposed that the young people had lately moved to a new apartment which Douka was visiting for the first time. He graciously recognized "his dear daughter's unfailing taste."

"I assure you," he remarked in polished English to Miss Burney, "that what she did with our tiny flat in Vienna was the envy of some of my colleagues who lived in mansions."

He promised to bring Theodora a little water-color of Russell Flint's which he had brought with him from London.

"It will hang just here," he said, indicating an empty space on the wall near the window; "the light is perfect for it."

When Anthi came in, he was sitting in a tall armchair near the fireplace, and remarked in low tones to Metro on the beauty of her eyes.

"They are exactly like her grandmother's. You were quite right." Then, smiling, he held out his hand to the child. "Come hither, then, mademoiselle my granddaughter!"

Anthi, who had previously been well coached as to her manners toward her new grandfather, went up readily to the strange, tall old man, allowed her long lashes to be examined, her cheek to be kissed, her hair to be stroked, and then, the ordeal over, she rushed to where Monsieur Arnoux sat on the other side of the room, climbed on the arm of his chair, and hugged him vigorously, rumpling his scanty white hair.

"Ah-noo, do you know I am going to sit up vewy late to-night! Later zan you! And my baba is going to tell me stowies!"

Michael Douka smiled urbanely on the pair. "You have a firm place in my granddaughter's affections, I see, Monsieur Arnoux. You must teach me the secret of your charm!"

"My secret," answered the little Frenchman rather dryly, "is merely one of custom, monsieur; the little one has known me all her life."

Later in the evening, when Douka had just left the house in company with Andriotti and the Delamanas, Theodora, who happened to be on the balcony with Costa, noticed her father slip his arm through that of Andriotti, as they walked down the street together in deep converse.

Costa looked at her and smiled. "The desire of your father's heart is not far from being realized, I think;

Andriotti, who is a personal friend of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and has great influence with him, will do anything for Metro."

Theodora flushed a little. "But do you think that Metro —"

"My dear Theodora, don't you make any mistake about it! It will make Metro very happy, and you must let him do it. Besides, you may make your conscience perfectly easy. It will be no putting of the wrong man in the wrong place, because he happens to be a relation. Your father, my dear, is an admirable diplomat in every respect, besides representing our country most ornamentally; and Metro will be so sincerely happy that it should happen through him. No! No! You must not spoil it!"

As they reëntered the room they heard the sound of a deep voice relating: "And though Khalil, the little black slave, looked everywhere, the other green slipper was nowhere to be found."

Anthi was safely settled on her father's knees and the story-telling had begun.

Miss Burney and Zoe were getting ready to leave, and through the open door of the room they could see the smile on the latter's face as she stood with her arm round Miss Burney's shoulder. When Theodora and Costa went out to them in the hall, Zoe turned to Theodora: "Has that cousin of yours been telling you that he forced me to say things to him that will always give him a weapon against me when we quarrel?"

Costa looked at her reproachfully.

"Oh, yes, Costa, you may look, but there is a good deal of obstinacy in both of us, and we shall never be a model couple! Do you know, Theodora, that he will always be able to remind me that I threw myself unasked at his head!"

Then she slipped her arm through his, and he looked down into her eyes without speaking.

Theodora went downstairs with them and let them out herself.

She walked slowly upstairs again, and as she did so the smell of violets came wafted down the staircase. She remembered that her father had brought her a big bunch and that they were still tied up and lying on the hall table.

So she went into the small pantry for a bowl of water and some glass vases which she kept there. As she came into the hall again, balancing the bowl carefully, she heard Metro's voice through the open door: —

"So the green slippers were found at last, and on the day of the wedding they were brought in a crystal casket lying on a silken cushion, and the little black slave boy Khalil placed them on the Pasha's feet. So he married Taira, and they all lived well, and we still better."

Metro's voice had become fainter and fainter toward the end of the story, and after that there was silence.

Theodora finished arranging her violets leisurely, and then, picking up one of the vases, passed through the open door.

It was almost dark in the sitting-room.

Metro was sitting far back in the armchair, and little Anthi, lying huddled up in his arms, had gone fast asleep.

Theodora put down her vase, and stepping softly, bent over them.

"And so the story is finished?" she whispered.

"Yes," he answered gently; "the story is quite finished."

And then she bent lower and their lips met over the head of the sleeping child.

THE END

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